FIC 4F

No. 2. No. 2.

ORNUM & CO'S

FIFTEEN CENT ROMANCES.

WILL WAFFLES;

OR

THE FREAKS AND FORTUNES OF A NEWSBOY.

ORNUM & CO., Publishers, New York.

L. A. BARTH, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

Robert
Mannan
His
Book

WILL WAFFLES;

OR, THE

FREAKS AND FORTUNES OF A NEWSBOY.

BY

JOHN F. COWAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERIES OF THE NIGHT," "PATRIOT SPY OF BRANDYWINE," ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK,
ORNUM & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
Beekman Street.

CLASSICS
PS
1449
.C527
WS
1911
S

WILL WAFFLES:

OR

THE FREAKS AND FORTUNES OF A NEWSBOY.

By John F. Cowan.

CHAPTER I.

QUICK SALES—A SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT.

A wild sloggy evening had closed over the Empire City.

A fierce wind whirled through the thoroughfares in so irregular a manner, that it would have puzzled a conjuror to tell which of the four corners of the earth (if the earth has corners), it hailed from, or which of the points of the compass should by right stand godfather for it. And truly the godfather, by responsibility of keeping such a restless rover in bounds, training him up in the way he should go, and performing all the other little duties set forth in the prayer book, would have anything but a light undertaking.

Rushing along streets, clattering shutters and creaking signboards, moaning down basements—turning the iron grating of the areas into mouth-organs on which to whistle its weird tunes, exploring alleys, investigating hallways, and howling horrors down chimneys to the weather bound inmates of the houses—on, on it rushed, bearing the black night on its rapid wings in fierce pursuit of the flying day.

The snow was deep on the streets, but it had lost all semblance of snow, and was transformed into muddy slush, through which man and beast plowed in angry recklessness.

The great multitude of workers were hurrying miserably homeward.

The great flying, screaming crowd of epitomizers,
The actual disseminators of knowledge,
The immediate enlighteners of mankind,
"The abstract and brief chronicles of the time,"

The alarm clocks that wake up the drowsy world,
The ravens that croak of disaster,
The bearers of glad tidings,
The trumpeters of grim visaged War,
The heralds of white robed Peace—
The NEWSBOYS—

Were abroad in full force, rushing from the offices of the evening papers with the latest edition, "as bees biz out wi' angry fyke," bawling like mad, and scattering away, each to his peculiar quarter.

One of the frequent deadlocks of trucks and street cars was in full blast in Park Row, cartmen and conductors cursing each other fervently, passengers growling and policemen ordering and threatening.

Through this Babylonian confusion, regardless alike of horses' hoofs and officers' rattans, a burly man, with heavily bearded face and slouched hat, pushed his way toward the City Hall Park. A rough, forbidding looking personage he was—dressed in very coarse clothes, albeit the wet sleet gave them a gloss not properly their own.

As he gained the opposite curb, one of the loudest voiced of the newsboys rushed up to him, uttering a flying list of the events of the day, with the constantly recurring burden:

"Daily Noo-is— five 'clock edition! Daily Noose, sir?

"Here, boy," said the man addressed, drawing close to the bill-covered fence that surrounds the New Post office building; "I want to speak to you."

"Can't see it! Business hours," cried the youngster; "No conversation with the man at the wheel! D'ye want the paper?"

"Yes," said the man, with his hand in his pocket, and the boy stopped to pull one from the bundle of papers sheltered from the rain beneath his rather long coat. "I'll buy all you have."

"Oh, come, let up—let up!" drawled the boy knowingly, as he held out his hand for the cent. "That's too thin!"

"What's your stock worth?"

"'Bout fifty cents retail; can't 'ford to sell 'em at office price, and lose my turn, you know. You know how it is yourself."

"Here you are, fifty cents."

"Honest Injun? Fair shake?"

"Fair."

"No go back?"

"No go back."

"There ye are, mister, but I guess you'll make deuced little off of that raffle. Goin' inter bizness?"

"No, I don't want them. Throw them away;" said the man, impatiently.

"Throw 'em away?" cried the boy in amazement. "Not much, if I know myself!"

"I want you to go a message for me."

"How will it pay? What is it?"

"It'll pay you ten times what the selling of papers would. Come with me, and I'll tell you what it is."

"Nuff said; I'm a passenger," cried the boy, decidedly. "But say, mister, there aint no use o' wastin' this here stock; mayn't I set up Patsy with them? He's short to-night. Run all his stamps on policy and got nary gig."

"Do what you like with them, but be quick.

"All right, boss. Hi-i-i-i, Patsy!" screamed the boy through his hands, in a tone so shrill that it sounded above all the tumult of the street.

Almost before the sound had ceased, a diminutive representative of the circulatory fraternity darted across the street—dodging through the horses' legs like a rabbit, and stood before the summoner demanding the reason of the summons.

"Sold clean out, Patsy, money in pocket and stock on hand. Hows that for high?"

Patsy duly expressed his astonishment at so mysterious a business transaction and gently intimated his firm belief that his friend had forsaken the plain paths of truth to indulge in the exaggerations of romance.

"Hush!" cried the friend behind his hand, glancing to where the man had strayed on and was waiting. "You can have the papers. "I'm a goin' with him. He doesn't know me, and thinks that I don't know that he's Walt Punkley. Mebbe not. He's got lots o'stamps and I'm jest a goin' for 'em red hot, you bet. That's how the old thing works!"

Next moment Patsy's shrill voice was heard re-selling the stock, and the other boy joining the man, they went rapidly up the side of the Park toward the Hall.

"Wait here," said the man turning into the park and staring sharply about him in the darkness.

The boy stood still for a few seconds, and then, dodging into the darkness, he took a quick circle, so as to get beyond his employer.

"Knowledge is power, they say," he said to himself; "and I'm blowed if I arn't goin' to be powerful if I can. There's the game, I guess."

He paused behind a tree near where the statue of Washington used to stand, before the entrance of the building, and saw by the uncertain, wafting light of the lamps a man descend the high stone steps to the square in front, look up at the illuminated clock in the tower, and then, with impatient mutterings, re-ascend and shelter

himself from the storm in one of the arches, with his back against the closed iron railing.

He heard the heavy plash of footsteps in the slush, and saw the man he had called Punkley approach the steps and pause. With a rapid and noiseless movement the boy flitted over to the further end of the steps and crept stealthily up into the shadow of one of the arches.

"Hist! Doc! Hadley! Is that you?" came the short, rapid whisper of Punkley.

"Yes, I'm inclined to think so," answered the individual at the top.

"Are you alone?"

"Lonely as a walrus on an iceberg, but not so comfortable by half."

"Who were you talking to," asked Punkley, ascending.

"Only having a little chat with grim Death, for I'm nigh about frozen. What the deuce kept you?"

"Business—business! It's getting brisk again. I've a lay to-night that you can help me in and make a handsome little stake for yourself—enough to make you have a soul above corn cures and transparent soap for the remainder of your days."

"What is it? Nothing very much out of the way, I hope," said Hadley, nervously.

"Oh, no, not much, Doc," said the other. "Only a little game to change money from the hands of a rich old feller that's got too much and don't let it roll, to the hands of a young feller that has'nt any objections to throwing a little to his friends."

"Look here, Punkley," exclaimed the man addressed as Doc; "I don't half like this kind of business. I aint up to it, and I didn't think, after my being so nearly caught last time, that you'd have asked me to try it again. If I had known 'twas for that you wanted me, I'll be hanged if I'd have frozen here so long to-night."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to try and get along on the square, if it does half kill me," said Hadley, in a very weak manner. "I want to get something honest—"

He was interrupted by a little sneering laugh from his companion, who, seizing him by the ragged sleeve, whirled him around so that the flickering lamp shone on his storm splashed face—a pale face with a thin, light-colored beard, large eyes and a wistful, hungry expression.

"Honesty, you idiot!" exclaimed Punkley, scornfully. "You're a pretty looking scarecrow to talk of honesty! Ain't the honest frost nipping the soles of your stockingless, almost shoeless feet? Ain't the honest wind blowing like icicles through your ragged clothes and rumbling in your supperless stomach? Honesty!

Pah! What will Honesty do for you but chuck you into a mud-hole when your soul gets disgusted with your fleshless bones? What epitaph will Honesty give you? None, but the bitter, silent one that the obscurity of your final resting place proclaims—'Outcast! vagrant! pauper!' Honesty will call you by any name but her own!"

"Peace, peace! for Heaven's sake, peace, Punkley," said the man in a tremulous tone.

"There is a high old school teacher for you!" soliloquized the boy in the next arch.

"Honesty!" continued the scoffer, not heeding the one and not hearing the other. "Try it on, and see if it will keep you living during the winter. That 'remittance from England,' never comes. You are played out at all the lodging houses, and you're so ragged that not a bunk-cellar in the city would give you head room on the strength of your coat. If you dare to show your nose in the police stations, they'll send you to the island as a vagabond. There is no more paving going on in the park, and no pitch fires for you to huddle before from the cold air. You miserable devil, what have you to do with honesty?"

The wretched object of this tirade shrank before the rapid, energetic flow of language, and uttered some expostulation which was inaudible to the boy.

"You have knowledge," continued Punkley; "and knowledge is money. I'm giving you a chance to turn it into hard cash. Can you live on your knowledge of plants and minerals unused? Can you make decent garments out of your useless diplomas? Bah! man, your sides are clapping together with hunger, you are shivering with cold! Come, we will get something to warm you. Come, honesty—ha! ha! ha!"

Laughing thus, the tempter caught the unresisting man by the arm, and nearly dragged him from the steps, and towards Chatham street.

"That's how the old thing works!" exclaimed the boy, as he deserted his hiding place and took a rapid circuit to reach the street before them. "If Walt Punkley ain't a mighty tall imitation of the devil, you may call me a haythen Chinee."

He gained the street and was dancing to keep himself warm when the men came up.

"Come, boy?" said Punkley, leading the way over into Frankfort street, and dodging into a dimly lighted saloon, he called for liquor and pushed the bottle toward Hadley, who poured out a large drink with trembling hand and swallowed it eagerly.

Hadley was a man not yet of middle age. He was pale, wasted, and wretchedly clad, with long, luxuriant hair falling, uncared for, to his shoulders. His movements were graceful, but not easy, for,

in speech, action and look, there seemed to be a nervous hesitancy, too evidently born of his hopeless struggle with fortune—a crushing consciousness of the depth of his degradation, for all his raggedness and wretchedness could not hide the evidence of better days.

The boy was one of the brightest of the strong-willed, self-reliant little men that form his class. Not particularly well fitted in the matter of clothes, not very regardful of personal appearance, but with a light, active form, well-shaped features, a prominent forehead, and eyes as bright and quick as those of a hawk.

"I think I must have seen you before, my boy," said Punkley, eyeing him by the bar light.

"Altogether likely, boss," answered the boy with easy confidence; "'specially if you've been much around these here diggins, or the lower end of York generally. I'm a native born in these parts."

"You seem to be a smart boy."

"You jest bet yer pile I've cut my eye-teeth, sir. Else there wouldn't be no use of me trying to travel with our crowd. Might make myself mighty few jest as soon's I liked. Muffins nor flats not admitted under no pretences whatever. Jest as might be with a gang of yer own you know. You know how the old thing works."

He concluded this speech in a significant, confidential manner, pointing the slang phrase with a most knowing wink. The man bent his piercing black eyes on the youthful face for a few seconds without speaking, and seemed satisfied, for he read there only the precocious smartness and conceited forwardness of the street boy, nothing more. And the boy stood scrutinizing the fifty cent stamp, he had received for his stock, as if utterly unconscious of the presence of the person to whom he had lately spoken.

"Are you acquainted with the upper part of the city?" asked Punkley.

"I believe you, my boy. Not much of it'll come crooked to me."

"I will write a note that I want you to take. It needs care in the delivery. If you bring me back a favorable answer, I'll give you five times as much as that," pointing to the stamp that the boy was wrapping around his finger.

"You don't say!" cried the youngster, looking up to catch the hungry looking eyes of Hadley fastened greedily on the money. "All right, boss, git yer note, I'm on deck."

Punkley got writing materials from the bar-tender, and retired into a small room at the back of the saloon, first leaving orders that Hadley should have more liquor. Of this privilege the trembling man gladly availed himself, and was putting the shaking tum-

bler to his lips, when the boy sidled up to him, and said in a low tone:

"I say, young feller, do you know that you're making a dog-gonnd fool of yourself? Don't you drink that red-eye, mind I tell you; if you do, you're a caved community—that's what's the matter!"

"What do you mean?" asked Hadley, half angrily.

"Why, are you such a blamed flat as not to know what his game is? He's putting up a job for you, and when he gets you safe into it, he'll slide and let the cops scoop you in. They must give some one up once in a while, else there'd be no more use for officers and prisons. That's why he's a fillin' you full o' rectified thunderbolts and givin' you nothin' to eat."

"Who are you! You are one of his associates," said the man suspiciously.

"Not for Joe—not if I know myself," cried the youngster; "I'm on the make—I am, and I don't deny it; and I'm bound to have his twenty shillin'. We're all on the make, more or less, every blessed one of us. But, speakin' newsboyishly, I hope I may be stuck bad if I ain't broadside down on all such full-rigged scoundrels as Walt Punkley, and I hate to see a feller with a good core, if his bark is rough, have to give up the ship on account of hunger."

There was a stir in the inner room, and he tried hastily to slip the fifty cent stamp into Hadley's hand, but the man, as if hurt by the patronizing manner of one so much younger than himself, drew back, and looked down at the small form of his would-be benefactor, who was now offended in his turn.

"I suppose," said the boy, ironically, "that you're a free-born Englishman, waitin' for a remittance from Europe, you're above takin' anything from an American boy. But, let me tell you, mister, that's 'arned honest—and that's a whole hop, step and jump more than anything you get from him'll be, or I'm a Chaynerman."

"You are a kind-hearted lad," said Hadley, with a tremor in his voice and a tear glistening in his eye.

"No better nor I should be," said the boy, softened by these signs of emotion. "I've seen ups and downs myself, and I know how to feel for others. I know you're hungry and that *he* means to keep you so. Oh! he's top-sawyer in the devil's sawpit, if he ain't call me Rudolf. Here, take it, you're welcome to it. You need it—I don't. It'll help you to hold out agin him till you're able to scare up some more."

'What is your name, my boy, and where can I find you, to thank and repay you at some future day?" asked the man with emotion, as the boy crushed the money into his emanciated hand.

"Lord, don't mention that," said the youthful humanitarian. "When you get your wealth and have a mansion as big as Stew-

art's, I'll invite myself to eat the fifty cents out some day when you have no other company. But if you do ever want to see me, all you've got to do is to come within a half a mile of the City Hall and ax the first feller you see bawlin' papers, where Will Waffles is, and he'll steer your bark to this *'ere one's ile.*"

"I shall see you again."

"All right. Cheese it. Here comes Beelzebub, Junior. Look out for him," said Will Waffles, adding behind his hand as Punkley advanced, "You can git grandiferous cakes and coffee, and a splendangerous plate, either hot or cold, at pocket-saving prices, at Hitchcock's right round the corner on Chatham Street, first dive above French's. Tell Jerry that Will Waffles sent you, and he'll slap you up somethin' gallus. Well-known there, reg'lar customer."

Punkley took the boy to one side and gave him minute directions about the delivery of a note which he gave him and the return of the answer, and Will Waffles started toward the door, whispering to Hadley while Punkley was paying the score:

"Mind your eye, be wide-awake. Don't take any more rot-gut; part company and sling in a good lunch—that's what'll set you up Old Nicodemus always fishes for empty stomachs. So take care of yourself old feller, and Will Waffles is yours diabolically—as the devil said to the tailor.

"Hallo! youngster!" cried Punkley. "Ain't you away yet?"

"All right, Cap!" cried the boy, buttoning his coat to the neck. "Signal to cut stick—all aboard—streamers waving in the wind. One moment, and I'm off like a fire-cracker."

And with hat cocked sportingly on one side of his head, and hands thrown forward driving an imaginary *Dexter*, this patronizing young adventurer dashed jubilantly away out into the storm.

"Now we can have a talk on business," said Punkley.

Hadley shrank back as if he would have left the place, but the other burst into a derisive laugh, and seizing him by the arm, said:

"What, what, Doc, you ain't over your colic yet! These qualms will be the death of you. Come, something hot is what you want."

The small spark of manliness and resistance which had been awakened by Will Waffles glimmered and died, and the spirit-broken man fell once more under the influence of his evil genius—Walt Punkley.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN CHUNK'S MISSION—THE BLOODY LETTER—A GLEAM OF FORTUNE.

WILL WAFFLES was a true metropolitan Arab, as far as the restlessness of disposition, the spurning of restraint, and the utter contempt of straight-laced conventionalities went; but truth forbids that I should ascribe to him that spirit of wholesale spitefulness supposed to be characteristic of the descendants of Ishmael.

In the matter of descent 'tis true there was a mystery about Will Waffles, His origin was as beclouded as that of the Onondaga giant. Like the wild boy of the scriptures he had been cast upon the desert of life, to perish. No soft-handed—fond-hearted Hagar strove to shield him from the elements or moistened his feeble lips: —but the angel of mercy appeared in the form and substance of some two hundred and odd pounds of human flesh, encasing a heart of magnificent proportions, inclosed in female attire, engaged in the fruit and cake business and entitled Mag Lees. In compliment to her jovial nature, the boy humourists who "most do congregate" about the City Hall Park had extended this name into Meg *Merry* Lees, in the same manner as they had christened the hero of this story after the most popular commodity in which the old lady dealt.

Well, briefly, Meg Lees, returning to her home one night, came upon a crowd of people standing around a door step on which a deserted infant was waiting pitifully. The discoverers and passers-by, evidently fearing trouble and responsibility, stared idly at the child, indulged largely in mouth-sympathy, talked Charities and Corrections, (beautiful combination,) but never offered to lift the little outcast from the cold stones.

Meg Lees heard the plaintive appeal of the litttle sufferer, and it smote her heart like a cry from the grave. She saw the white, dimpled face, and the tearful picture of a small, snowy-robed form with closed eyes and folded hands arose before her, and, for the sake of the cherished dead, she took the sobbing waif to her capacious bosom and bore it homeward.

She bestowed the name of her buried favorite upon the adopted child, and through the long years of struggles and hardship, had been a good mother to him, until at last his own enterprise and independent spirit started him out in the humble pursuit of fortune.

And who was better adapted for the strife than Will Waffles? Never a stouter heart beat beneath a red shirt; never a better temper smiled at reverses, or a more hopeful spirit looked into the future: never a more willing hand sounded the depths of a light pocket for the relief of a friend.

There are events and moments which exert a great after-influence upon all human lives: and such a moment was Will Waffles' exit from the bar-room to him: for, in bolting out suddenly, with his head lowered to catch the first burst of the storm, he planted it, in the manner of a battering ram. in the waistcoat of a dripping little man, who was surveying the interior of the saloon through a rent in the curtain. The consequence was that the little man's hat flew into the air, and its proprietor took an involuntary seat on a pile of frozen dirt at the curb.

"Domino! How's that for low?" exclaimed the boy with a crow like a rooster.

"Curse you!" cried the man angrily, endeavoring to regain his feet.

"Don't mention it, I beg! Keep on your hat—no need to apologize—you're quiet excuseable," said Will magnanimously, about to hurry away.

But the injured man did not seem to fall in with this view of the case, for he scrambeled up and threw himself in the boy's path, hat in hand.

"Stop!" he said, "I want to speak to you."

"Sorry, very sorry, to see any one in want, replied Will, "but 'tain't a talking night, and biz before pleasure, you know."

He was passing when the man laid his hand heavily on his shoulder and detained him forcibly.

"Paws off, old duffer! or I'll put a Mansard roof on you!" exclaimed the boy, wrenching himself free, and striking a defensive attitude. "Name your game and tell us your fightin' weight. How could I help upsettin' yer apple cart? What d'ye go a gluing yer eye to the window for? Did yer take it for a show?"

"Never mind that—never mind that," said the man in an eager jerky manner." "Accidents will happen. Life is like a railroad, collisions and bust-ups at every curve and crossing. "I'm used to em. You're a messenger."

"Well, what if I am? What d'ye want to make of it? How does that affect gold?"

"I'll put *gold* in your pocket."

"Oh, let up, give's a rest?" said the boy impatiently, "Who d'ye think I am? Do you take me for a flat?"

"You are prudent to doubt. Life is full of deceptions!" said the little man, solemnly, life is like a quick-sand——"

"Oh blow you and life! Dry up!" cried the boy.

"There is no trick or deception in this," said the man, more rapidly, I mean for your good. I have been looking for you."

"No you don't—that's too thin! I must cherry, and that's what's the matter with Hannah!"

"Stay a moment. You are known as Will Waffles!"

"Yes, that's about the size of it. What then?" said the boy interestedly.

"That is not your name, you do not know yout name. Life is full of mysteries. You are a foundling!"

The boy started and stared into the strange face, on which the melting snow glistened in the flickering light of the red lamp over the saloon door, every drop looking like a large, inflamed pimple.

"Look a here, old feller!" said Will, "I dont know who may 'a posted you on my affair, but, by Jimminy, you've nailed it. I'm jest what yon say, and though I don't know as the difference of a feller's cognum is either heue or there, still if you happen to know anything particular about my auntysedunts, you'll greatly oblige the subscriber by—"

"Let's get out of the wet," said the little man.

We took Will by the arm, and leading him down the street they dodged into one of the lager bier saloons. Once inside the man shook himself like a Newfoundland dog, and turned to face the boy. A very strange looking little fellow he was, Will Waffles thought as he looked at him. He was very low in stature and very squat in figure, and the style of his dress increased this effect. His hat was the lowest crowned and broadest brimmed tarpalius, his overcoat a box sack of the monkey jacket order, made of cloth a half inch thick, more or less, as they say in acurate legal documents, a very short broad face, weather beaten and wrinkled, sat snug down to the shoulders, for there seemed to be no neck to speak of. There was a stolid expression of gravity and thoughtfulness on tho features, but it was rendered ludicrous by the quick moving, cunning expression of the eyes, hat, form and face, taken altogether, gave a striking outline resemblance to a trained bullfrog standing erect.

'You are known as Will Waffles," he said.

"Guilty, my lord!" answered the boy.

"I'm John Chunk!" he said grandly.

"Proud to know you, sir!" bowed Will, as if deeply impressed by the greatness of the occasion.

"Life is a strange thing!" said Mr. Chunk, philosophically.

"Life's a blarsted sell," agreed Mr. Waffles.

"It is all a dream!" sighed Mr. Chunk.

"A regilar cod!" indorsed Mr. Waffles. "But say, old man, I'm n a hurry, and here we are a holdin' camp-meetin', while Old Dun der-und-blitzen there a measuriug us for lager. Say, you Haunce

pring us zwei peers! Now Mr. Chunk, rattle it lively, let us hear the latest by cable. If its a square shake—I'm in: If there's any gay about it—count me nix."

Mr. Chunk fastened his eyes upon his glass of beer, as if searching in its amber depths for some fresh truth in regard to life's vicissitudes.

"Ah, my young friend," he said mournfully, "Life is——"

"Oh, bother life!" exclaimed his young friend, impatiently! Life's a prize conundrum, and I give it up. Why you talk like a cart-wheel without grease—the same screek every turn round. We come here to talk biz. How d'ye know me, and what d'ye want with me?"

"That's what I would tell," said Mr. Chunk, in a deliberate manner, "Bellevue Hospital is a grand institution—a wonderful place! Life is there seen in its hardest phases—I go there to study life."

"Oh! for heaven's sake make one act of it!" hastily interrupted the boy. "Cut it short, or I'll have to git."

Mr. Chunk looked at him reproachfully, and resumed in a quicker manner.

"Passing through one of the wards where life is displayed in its hardest phases——"

"Talks like a war correspondent!" muttered Will.

"I heard a voice, rough but low, addressing me," continued Mr. Chunk, pausing to sip his beer.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Chunk, voice rough, but low, addressing you!" prompted Will.

"I approached the bed from which it proceeded," went on Mr. Chunk, in a mysterious manner.

"Ye-s-s-s!—Ye-s-s! Moon turned on full, music low and tremulous!" said Will Waffles, his curiosity and his love of fun struggling for the mastery.

"My boy," said Mr. Chunk reprovingly, "Life is no laughing matter."

"Not much, cully, the way you dish it up. Let the play proceed."

"The sight I saw, I shall never forget."

"Reporter agin!"

"At any time life is——"

"A-w-w-h! Give's a rest, and go on with your yarn."

"A wild face—haggard and pale—a bandaged head with a blood mark oozing thro' the cloths, and a wounded hand lying upon the counterpane was what I *saw*," said John Chunk, impressively. "What I *heard* was that he liked my looks—that he had been pretty badly cut up in a bar-room fight, that he felt himself sinking fast, that he had a message to send to a boy to be found in or near Printing House Square, and that the worldly cognomen of that boy was William Waffles. Is that direct enough?"

"Plain and sharp as the time of a clog-dance," said the boy, "but the message?"

"The wounded man put his hand beneath the pillow and pulled out this," said John Chunk, producing a very clumsily folded, dirty looking letter, stained with blood.

"Well, well!" cried the boy, excited by the sensational missive.

"He said he had carried it for years, and had managed to hide it from the attendants when they took away his clothes. He said he wanted to do a great right before he died, and asked me to seek you out and give this to you, and tell you to take it immediately to its address, for that would be the making of you. So there it is John Chunk has done his trust!"

He threw the mysterious letter upon the table as he spoke, but the boy stared at him and it alternately without lifting it.

"You needn't be afraid of it," said John Chunk, "It's a fortune for you. The address is Fifth Avenue—folks must be rich—one of the many ups and downs of the world. John Chunk wishes you joy. Life is——"

"See here, old top," said the boy, eyeing the man distrustfully, "ain't you a tryin' to git me on a string?"

"I received the letter as I tell you, and have delivered it as I promised," said John Chunk severely.

"Well, you needn't go a gettin'your back up about it. Its only nateral a feller should be shy o' swallerin' such a tough yarn. Looks to darned like a play. The way they do it in the Bowery. Dyin' willain' confesses willainy—bloody letter—strawberry mark on arm—delighted parients—smiles of rapture—tears of joy—fond embrace—God bless you my children!—blue light and the curtain falls."

John Chunk stared at him with his grave expression for a moment and then laughed, and the eccentric youth lifted the letter and joined in the merriment.

"That's what knocks me, you know," he said, as if he were reading Chunk's thoughts. "I hain't got no strawberry marks, and I hain't made no arrangements with any other feminine child to be God blessed along with me. That's what takes the starch out of it. I wonder if its true, and what kind of a bloke the writer of this 'ere was, and who was my father anyhow, and if my mother's alive, and why she throwed me away when I was a papoose."

This latter part was spoken in a serious pathetic tone, notwithstanding the words in which it was couched, for slang was the boy's usual mode of expression, and the habit had grown upon him so that he unconsciously used the same odd phrases to convey all grades of feeling, and all shades of meaning.

"Lord, if it should be true, though!" he said in a more gleeful manner. "Wouldn't I make Meg Merry Lees stare? Eh, John Chunk? Wouldn't I fix her up gay? Wouldn't I pitch into Stewart's stock of black silk lively? (Meg's hefty on black silk.) Mebbe not—oh, no! Eh, old man? Wouldn't we have a high old time? All the hacks in Central Park—all the gondolas on the lakes! Wouldn't we pic-nic and excursion it? Wouldn't we clam-bake and chowder it? Eh! John Chunk?"

And, under the influence of these brilliant imaginations, the young dreamer seized the astonished John Chunk and whirled him helplessly around and around the sanded floor in a reckless demon dance, so rapid in movement that the ribbon ends of the little man's tarpaulin fluttered and cracked, and his own long coat-tails streamed gracefully on the breeze.

"Hold, hold!" gasped the purple-faced John Chunk, puffing like a grampus, "A little exercise is good, my boy, but, at the very best, Life is——"

"Just so, John Chunk—never mind the rest—I'll take your word for it. If this here thing goes through all hunkey and I make a big stake, I'll fit you up in business so you can abuse life up to the handle, even to susan-cide if you're a mind to. Won't I give the boys a reg'lar blow-out–though? 'The Will Waffles Chowder Club"—The Lady Washington and a dead block in Fulton street—long horns and cow-bells—eh! Cully, how's that for flush?"

"Not too fast, my boy," said John Chunk, sagely, "Counted chickens never hatch. Life's a lottery, and——"

"The sooner we see the drawings the sooner we'll know our luck," concluded Will, rapidly, sticking the crumpled letter into his pocket along with Punkley's; "Come, John Chunk, we've got a *horse* on fortune and let us see what its worth. I'm in a streak of luck to-night—letter-carrier general to his screamin' majesty, the King of the Cannibal Islands. Shoo you fly! Don't you go bodder mit me! What's the use of a new post office when I'm 'on hand'—like Johnny Thompson. Come, let's git."

"Can't go," said Mr. Chunk, "sorry can't, but can't. Shop to be shuttered and old woman waiting."

"Nuff, said John Chunk, don't distress the Chunkess, or the little Chunkesses, but jest let me know where you swing yer hammock, and I'll whack up. You can count on Will Waffles."

"John Chunk's your friend," said the little man shaking the extended hand. "There's my card—East Houston street, near the bell-tower. If we should ever meet again—but I doubt it, for life is——

"A grand fraud—a fearful flam! Just so!" exclaimed the disappearing boy, "Good bye, John Chunk!"

"A strange boy,"soliloquized Mr Chunk, gazing at the closing door—"Very odd—but very true! Life is——"

"Der is den zent, for de doe drinks,' said the Teutonic presiding genius of the place.

"Life is a grand fraud—a fearful flam!" said John Chunk, as he paid it and and rolled himself ill-temperedly out of the door.

CHAPTER III.

THE GLEAM OF FORTUNE CLOUDED—ON THE ROOFS—A PERILOUS POSITION.

About half an hour afterwards Will Waffles descended the area steps of a gloomy house in Fourteenth Street, and knocked at the basement door. It was opened by an elderly colored woman, shading a small kerosene lamp with her fat hand.

"Well, honey, what's ye want?" she asked.

"Does Mister Oscar Mifflin hang out in this crib?"

"Yes, Mis'sar Mifflin libs hear."

"Is he in? I want to see him."

"He's in. But who be you?" asked the woman offended by his free manner.

"Tell him that William Waffles, Esquire, has the condescension to wait upon him," said Will, slapping his wet cap against the door jamb."

"He doesn't see many fol ks,now-a-days,' she said,"What's your business."

"Business!" exclaimed Waffles, drawing himself up pompously. "I'm outside partner of the American News Company, and general agent of the daily press, so ax me into the stove, and don t be makin' mouths about it, for I'm as wet as a musk-rat and as cold as charity."

Without waiting or asking for permission he pushed in, and spread himself out before the hall heater. After some questioning and grumbling, the servant disappeared up the stairs, and shortly returned followed by a sallow complexioned young man with long black hair, sharp features, and deep-sunken, evil looking eyes. He had on a lavender-colored, red-braided smoking jacket and cap, and his small feet were encased in richly embroidered slippers

There was no light in the hall but that of the feeble lamp which the servant had set on a small bracket fastened to the wall, and the man approached in such a manner that the boy's face, being turned toward him, was full in the light.

"Well, boy, what do you want?" he said.

"An answer to that," said Will, pulling the epistle from his pocket and handing it to him.

"This should have been here two hours ago," said the man approaching the lamp.

He held the paper in his hand, up to the light, but, with a sudden start and exclamation, he glanced toward the boy and then tore the letter open. Strange was the light that gleamed in his sinister eyes and the expression that flitted across his sallow face.

"Who gave you this?" he asked, suddenly turning on the boy.

"None o' my bizness," answered the messenger warily, for he had noticed the man's motion. "Him what sent it said you'd know—hain't he signed hisself?"

"Yes, yes, but come up stairs," said Mr. Mifflin shortly, as his eyes fell upon the attentive negress, standing at a short distance like an ebony statue.

"All right, heave ahead I'm there," said Will, swaggering after him.

They went along the carpeted hall, and past a room door, lying ajar through which Will Waffles saw a fairy-like girl with bright golden ringlets, thrumming on a piano, and his fervid imagination leaped at once to the possession of just such a gorgeous room, just such an immense piano, and just such a sylph-like player—when he got his wealth.

Ah, Will, Will, remember the boy that chased the rainbow—there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

Up two more long, winding flights, and Mr. Mifflin tells the boy to wait on the landing a minute and enters a room, returning in a moment with a hand lamp, and leading the way up another staircase, narrow and uncarpeted. A sort of vague misgiving flashed into the boys' mind, and he paused at the foot.

"Come on!" said Mifflin, from above, "What are you afraid of?"

"Nothing," said Will, ascending, "I was only a wonderin' whether it was an observatory or a shot tower you kept up there."

The man did not answer but opened a door from which a damp gust of air came, fluttering the lamp, and sighing through the passages.

"Guess we're about at the head of the beanstalk, mister," said

the boy, as they stood within a lumbered, disused-looking room.

Mifflin closed the door and laid the lamp on a ricketty table.

"Now," he said to Will Waffles, "where did you get this from?"

"From him I told you of."

"Do you know what's in it?"

"No."

"Can you read writing?"

"A little. Not much."

"Who are you? What's your name?"

"William Lees—They call me Will Waffles for a nick-name."

The man caught him by the arm and whirled him to the light to examine his face, and several rapidly muttered exclamations escaped him as he did so.

"Say, look here, mister," cried the boy, wincing from the pain of the man's grasp.

"Guess you'd best let up on that, or blow me if I don' t bust you in the snoot!"

Mifflin released him, and assuming a re-assuring manner said:.

"I was mistaken, I thought I had seen you before. I must think over the answer to this. You wait here awhile."

"Not if I know myself, and I think I do," starting for the door at the same time that the man did.

"Why, you little fool, what are you afraid of? No harm'll happen to you." said Mifflin holding him back with one hand while he opened the door with the other.

"Let me go, you!" cried the boy, struggling with his captor. "Let me go, I tell you, or it'll be worse for you!"

But the man held him in an iron grip and said, in a whispering tone:

"Be quiet, you young fool! No one will harm you. You must wait here for a few moments until I get the answer ready."

"No, you don't. That's too thin," cried Will, making a desperate effort to rush past; but Mifflin flung him back and shut the door, and as the young prisoner laid his hand upon the knob, he heard the key turn in the lock.

The old suspicions of the evil character of Walt Punkley, and the doubtfullness of this business came upon him, and he kicked the panels of the door violently, and bellowed threats and imprecations through the key-hole.

"Look a here, old Joskin!" he cried, "I 'spose ye think ye've got a soft thing on me, but you'll git sick of it—see if you don't—that's all.

He listened but there was no answer.

"Mind you, I got the lamp," and, by the lord Harry, I'll set fire to the crib and give you a house warming!' he yelled with increasing anger through the key-hole.

The closing and fastening of another door was all the sound that met his ear, and, uttering a string of words, more forcible than elegant, he sprang to seize the lamp. But he paused as his eyes fell upon a crumpled, stained paper that lay upon the ricketty table.

Will Waffles was but poorly gifted in the reading or writing of letters, and it was only by the blood stains upon the paper that he recognized the outer sheet of the clumsy missive conveyed to him by John Chunk.

With an exclamation he snatched it up, and producing Punkley's letter from his pocket, stared from one to other in angry bewilderment.

"Sold, by jingo! Changed off and all my fortin' gone up salt creek! Reg'lary up in a baloon!" he cried, "I might a knowed it. Its jest my luck. That's what come o' boastin' about blowouts and black silks, and eatin' yer clams afore they're baked. Blow the luck, its too rough! This feller is a pal o' Punkley's and there'll be rough times for me 'atween 'em if the story about the letter is fair and square, and I believe John Chunk."

Then it struck him that, between these two desperate gamesterers for wealth, there would be little chance left for a life that would balk them, and this thought placing his immediate danger before him, he did not resume his vain endeavors at the door, but lifted the lamp and commenced to survey the apartment for some other means of escape. It was escape only that filled his mind now, he gave up the idea of present resistance, because he felt that it was hopeless and might prove fatal.

The apartment in which he was locked was a garret room, filled with the wrecks of age-worn furniture and other dust-colored lumber. The ceiling slanted low to one side, and was perforated by a large dormer window. At one wall there was a small wretched looking fire-place, down which the big drops of snowy-rain splashed on the hearthstone, and the winter wind moaned its doleful song, rising and falling in wild, sorrowful tones like the wail of the houseless wanderers who shivered before its breath, or the moans of the half-frozen children who were huddled together in the fireless habitations of the poor.

"The chimley ain't no use," said the boy putting away the letter and envelope, "I s'pose the window's the only dodge."

He pulled aside a very old and dingy curtain, and tried to look through the storm splashed glass, but, between the dust on the inside and the sleet on the outside, it was not transparent.

With some exertion he opened the sash and a great gust of the storm burst in, nearly depriving him of breath and extinguishing his lamp with a splutter, thus leaving him in total darkness.

With the first shock of the gloom, and the first hollow sound of the wind in the dismal room, his cool courage deserted him, and a wild desire to fly from the place came over him.

The city lights flickered dull and fitfully down in the darkness, and away, away until the blackness of the storm shut them out. The rumble of carriages and omnibusesses, and the long roll of the street cars accompanied by the jingling of bells, came up in irregular swells, whilst the never-ceasing splash and patter of the drifting rain told him that this window opened on the top of the building, and he knew by the pitch of the ceiling that the roof was steep.

A desperate venture to go out in the darkness, he knew not whither—to perish of exposure, or be dashed to piece by sliding off the snow covered slates. The boy paused for a moment in doubt, but was suddenly decided in his choice by hearing, or thinking he heard, a sound behind him as of some one stealthily approaching the door.

With a quick, silent action, and a dread idea of being murdered in the dark, he straddled the window-sill and feeling outward with one hand and foot, was rejoiced to find that he was right down at the eave-trough, and that a low panelled parapet ran along its edge, thus promising security against his falling off into the street. Encouraged by this, he pulled his cap tighter on his head and commenced to creep along his dangerous track with trembling movements—for he was drenched to the skin—the clinging sleet chilled him—and at every moment he expected the fierce wind to whirl him off the slippery roof and dash him to pieces on the pavement below.

He passed several dormer windows, but those he tried were fastened and dark, and the nervousness and cold were taking such effect upon him that he was almost sorry he undertook so desperate a venture. He paused in his progress from sheer exhaustion, and gazed with a sort of agonized wistfulness at the brightly lighted windows of the houses on the opposite side of the street. If he could only make the inhabitants, or the policemen in the street hear his voice, they might come to his assistance and save him from the death that threatened him, for he was getting faint and weak.

He called aloud, but his words were drowned in the rush of the wind.

He had leaned rather heavily upon the panelling of the eave, to enable him to direct his voice downward, when, suddenly, he felt it move beneath his grasp.

With a wild cry of horror he threw himself back flat on the wet

roof and desperately clutched the cap of a brick cut-fire that separated two of the buildings.

The next instant the wind seized the loosened wood-work—tore it fiercely from its half rotten stays, and whirled it to the flags below with a crash that echoed through the street like the discharge of a ship's broadside.

Will Waffles, terrified by the thought of how narrow his escape had been, lay in his uncomfortable position, listening to the opening windows and the hurrying feet, and the calling of frightened voices, for all these sounds came wildly up to him. Then, with a glimmer of hope, he sat up and tried once more to attract attention by wild cries; but, as before, the whirling wind whistled his endeavors to scorn, and at last the sounds below ceased, the windows were closed and the people dispersed—with remarks that it was a dreadful storm.

Then a desperate courage came to the boy, and he endeavored by a strong exertion of will to shake off the numbness and fatal drowsiness caused by the cold.

"It'll never do to give it up so," he chattered, gatherin himself up again, "This is too much for high, I must try again, P'raphs may strike it this trip."

Another while of tedious and painful scrambling and his perseverance is rewarded by his seeing a glimmer of light from a dormer window, shining on the wet roof and flying sleet. In a minute the boy was rapping at the glass, but there was no answer to his appeal—no signs of life within.

It was no time for hesitation or delicacy, and Will Waffles hoisted the window and surveyed the interior.

CHAPTER IV

IN PARADISE.

The reader remembers the astonishment and delight of Aladdin when his gaze first fell upon the wondrous flowers and gem-bearing trees of the Geni's Cave. Therefore he will be the better able to appreciate the bewilderment of Will Waffles, when, on raising the attic window, his storm-beaten eyes rested on a scene of such brilliancy, so light, so splendid, so dazzling, that, contrasted with the late gloominess, it seemed to him like a glimpse of the regions of the blest.

The walls of the apartment were draped with the most gorgeously colored fabrics. Hung at intervals were robes of exquisite richness, bedizzened with spangles of gold and silver. Interspersed with these were displayed girdles and crowns of different designs, made of burnished metal and sparkling with many colored gems. Alternately with these were different highly ornamented musical instruments, the Grecian lyre, the Irish harp, with its angel's head, the old fashioned English gittern, the Spanish bandore, the Italian guitar, and lastly the Ethiopian banjo.

Here and there were suspended trophies of arms consisting of jewel-hilted swords, war-axes, spears and daggers, with shields so highly polished that they reflected the light like mirrors. On the chairs, and even scattered on the floor, were other pieces of bright head costume, and fantastic ornaments.

A coal fire glowed in the little grate, and beside this was a small round table with a snowy cloth and a tray containing a neat little tea-set and eatables, with a cosy arm-chair drawn up, as if waiting impatiently for a hungry occupant.

The whole of this strange scene was shown to the dripping Will Waffles by the light of a large glass lamp, which sat, slightly turned down, on the mantel-piece.

The boy gazed for a short time in utter astonishment at the bright display, but the unimpressible winter wind soon brought him back to the unpleasant reality of his position, and lessened his awe of the armor sufficiently to enable him to call out:

"Who lives here? Is there anybody in?"

There was no answer, but the storm gave him a very urgent hint from without, and the fire seemed to wink him a very pleasant welcome from within; so all his scruples vanished, and, swinging himself over the window-sill, he let the window fall with a crash behind him, and stood still for a minute or two, almost expecting to see some pantomimic demon spring from the walls to brain him with one of the war-clubs.

But no such bloody-thirsty personage appearing, Will took courage to approach the fire, justifying his intrusion, however, by a loudly spoken speech, to the following effect:

"Can't be helped, you know. Circumstances over which your obedient servant had no control. Will Waffles is duced cold, and cold Waffles is more disgustin' than mud cakes. I really hope I don't intrude, but I must have a warm, and I'm a goin' to have it —you bet."

With the last words he threw himself into the arm-chair, stuck his wet, benumbed feet up, with his heels upon the top bar of the grate, and began a more minute survey of the surroundings.

"Well, I'll be danged if this 'ere isn't a lively go. Rather a

change from roofing it like atom-cat. Eh, cully?" hesoliloquized; "Wonder who the mischief hangs out in this crib? Almost looks as if I was expected. Supper for one—very tempting. Wonder dare I partake? Wonder what's in that other room. Wonder what's in the bottle! Booh! but I'm wet and cold! S'pose I was to uncork the bottle and sample it. But I guess I'd better sample that room first."

He arose and threw open a door that stood slightly ajar. Beyond it was a bed-chamber plainly but neatly furnished. The bed was tossed, as if some one had lately arisen from it, but no human form was visible.

"If I ain't grand sachem of the wigwam, I'm a flounder!" said Will with all his old, easy impudence coming back.

He swaggered back to the fire, and, after giving himself a couple of cold shakes, lifted a bottle from the tray and poured out a wine glass full of its contents.

"It would be a flyin' in the face of Providence," he said, "to let my chances slip. So here's a go! Here's to my mother's son Will, That's me. Ha! by Jimminy kings! that's slap up! That's what'll start the phosphorus in a feller's system, eh, Guv'ner?"

The question was addressed to a suit of light, shining armor that was placed erect against the wall, and presented the nearest resemblance to the human form divine on which the boy's eyes fell. With the happy freedom of his nature, Mr. Waffles immediately struck up an acquaintance with this silent individual, installing it in an off hand manner in the governorship of the establishment. With the returning feeling of comfortableness, and beneath the stimulating effects of the bottle, all the Wafflesonian facetitiousness and dash returned, and ere long he had not only demolished the eatables on the table, gravely thanking the armored effigy for its pressing attentions, but had sadly diminished the contents of the bottle by continual pledges of everlasting friendship and fealty to what he called his "newly-found, iron-bound friend."

"You see, Guv'ner," he said, "throwing his legs over the arm of the chair, and winking confidentially at the visioned helmet that represented the head of the 'guv'ner.' I'm one o' them fellers that likes to meet with a *polished* gentleman and I really believe you to be a man of *metal*. You don't care about taking anything? No! Don't mention it. It's all right. I know how it is myself. Hate to press a man. Not polite. Good health."

With a laugh at his own facetiousness, he swallowed another glass. The fumes of the wine were rising rapidly to his head, and the heat of the fire was causing the heavy vapor to rise from his wet clothes.

"By Jimminy kings! this will never work!" he exclaimed ris-

ing and steadying himself by the mantle-piece, "Lots o' splendiferous togs a lyin' round for the takin' and me a takin' my death o' rheumatiz! Oh, no, not for Joe."

First assuring himself that the door was fastened, he peeled off his wet clothes, and after much choosing and self-communing, and consultation with his "iron-bound friend," he had soon arrayed himself in the most flaring suit of Oriental costume that the room contained, and cocking the biggest and gaudiest of the crowns upon one side of his is head, he swaggered up and down the floor, as proud as the Emperor of Morocco.

"I say, Guv'ner. how's this for high?" he exclaimed, poking the suit of armor in the ribs with the scimitar he had appropriated. "Aint I galluss? Oh no! Mebbe not! Look for all the world like Fanny Herring in the *French Spy*. Hi-i-i-i! Terrific sword combat! Up and down. Round play. Thrust and parry. Die Villain. Go it ye cripples and make the sparks fly!"

Suiting the action to the word, the warlike young gentleman entered heroically into a tremendous hand to hand fight with several invisible moors, and at last, exhausted by his herculean exertions, threw himself into the arm-chair once more, poured out a glass of wine, and elevated his feet, now encased in red silk hose and yellow sandals, on the low mantel-shelf.

"Ef this 'ere aint a high old go, I'm a lobster—boil me! Wonder what the *Waffles' Sociables* would say if they only saw me thusly: settin' here a sippin' my lush like Queen Victoria or the boss of the Americus Club. Titavated like a pompey at a cigar store. Wouldn't the fellers stare if I went out a holloring papers to-morrow morning in this rig-out? Don't think they'd ever tumble to it. Most likely take me for some lively moke of a Haythen Chinee and go for me like wild cats. Ha! ha! What a solid sell that would be! Here's your health once more, guv'ner. Sorry you don't feel at liberty to join us. Very sorry, indeed!"

He emphasized his expression of sorrow with a double imbibation. All idea of intrusion or danger had disappeared with the rapidly increasing effects of the liquor, and at last drowsiness began to creep over him, his soliloquies, became more broken and incoherent and at last sank into mere mutterings of recovered fortunes and discovered parents and morning papers. Visions floated around him of slouched-hatted villains, and blubber-faced, pig-eyed Asiatics, and clumsily-shaped Chinese junks sailed by clumsy-shaped, sailor-like John Chunks—and what not, until the stupor closed down on him suddenly like night-fall in Africa, his head dropped on his breast the jewelled crown fell ludicrously over one eye, and, with a snore like a flourish of trumpets, the soul of Waffles soared to dreamland.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER TRANSFORMATION AND SOME PLOTTING.

WALT. PUNKLEY and his timid protegee, Hadley, waited long and anxiously in the saloon for the return of Will Waffles with the answer. There is a limit to the patience of all men, and at length Walt Punkley's gave way in a torrent of curses that completely upset the nerves of his companion.

"Come," he said, "If this gent won't come to us we must go to him. He has got to do his share of this business, and will have a fine game to play if he dodges me. Come!"

Hadley, with the fifty cents given to him by Will Waffles, clasped tight in his hand, and his hands shoved very deep into his pants pocket, said in a weak manner that he had an appointment to keep—that he couldn't go.

"Curse you! What's the matter with you?" exclaimed Punkley. "Don't you begin a riling me, too, or you'll get the worst of it, mind if you don't. I'm riled enough already. So come along."

Seizing him as an angry school-master might a rebellious boy, he dragged him from the place, and into a street car at the corner. Little did the other passengers who turned to look at the great, burly, bearded man, and his emaciated companion, think of the fearful influence for evil being thus daringly exerted before the very eyes of the public—or how hopelessly this poor fellow had been placed in the power of a ruffian by destitution and strangeness in the city.

A very short time brought them to the house to which Will Waffles had borne the letter that caused such a change in his plans. Punkley told his companion to wait at the foot of the high stone steps while he ascended.

First the servant appeared black and grim, and then Mr. Mifflin, white and angry. After a few sharp whispers on either side, Punkley called to Hadley, who reluctantly ascended, and Mifflin hurried them along the passage and up the stairs to a room on another floor.

"Now," he said, sharply, as he closed the door behind him. "What, in the name of all the fiends, brings you here?"

"Why the devil didn't you come to where I told you?" cried Punkley, in a savage tone.

"To where you told me!" said Mifflin, in unfeigned astonishment, "You said the boy had been here."

"He was."

"And did he not bring a note asking you to meet me?"

"No, he brought this."

Punkley snatched the paper from the man's hand, and held it to the light.

"Where did he get this?" he cried, gazing suspiciously at Mifflin.

"How should I know? he said it was from you."

"It was a lie. Where is he now?"

"Gone."

"Gone!" cried Bunkley, furiously. "Death and furies, why did you let him go, and you knowing the contents of this?"

"What could I do?" said Mifflin. "Would you have me raise a riot here, and expose all our plans? Besides, the boy didn't know what that was about."

A change came over Punkley's dark face, and after a moment's reflection he said, quietly:

"You are right, Oscar, you are right. He could not have known. 'Twas safer to keep quiet—I can hunt him up again—but who the devil would have thought it? I must seek him out."

A strange look—a sort of sinister half smile, flitted across the thin white lips of Mifflin, as he heard the last words, but he suppressed it, and resumed, shortly:

"Seeing that you are pleased to approve of my caution in that case why are you so reckless as to come here against my wishes, and bring HIM here?"

As he said these words, Mifflin cast one contemptuous look from head to foot of the miserably clad Hadley, who stood just within the door, twirling his dripping hat in his bony hands, and glancing in a furtive manner from one to the other of these mysteriously spoken men.

"If you had come to me I shouldn't have come to you," said Punkley. "This is the medical gentleman that I promised to procure from Philadelphia to attend the old man. You might be a little more polite than to turn up your nose at his rig. This is his travelling costume. He had to leave his professional labors so suddenly to attend to your pleasure, that he had not time to think either of change or portmanteau."

"Oh, this is Mr. ——"

"Doctor Hadley, of Philadelphia, the only man in the world who can cure the old man, Oscar," said Punkley. "What about the toggery. You've got plenty, and you're about a size. Don't fret about your trunk, Hadley, he'll fix you up all right."

Hadley's pale face had flushed crimson under Mifflin's scrutiny, and the sneering raillery of Punkley, but as the former advanced toward

him with smiling face and extended hand, his weak nature seemed compelled to yield, and accept the proffered friendship.

"I am happy to make the acquaintance of so skilled a gentleman as Professor Hadley," said Mifflin. "I am very sorry, for your own convenience, that you were forced to come on without your baggage, but I hope that you will do me the honor to accept a change from me until your own clothes arrive."

Hadley's blood tingled at the tone of irony that ran through this speech. The mock respect of it offended him, and he withdrew his cold hand.

"Just step into this room, and you will find everything needful," said Mifflin, apparently not noticing his displeasure.

Hadley did not move or answer.

"Go, when you are asked!" said Walt Punkley, roughly. "What do you make such a blasted fool of yourself for?"

Strange to say, the person that stickled at the polite request obeyed the coarse order without a word, and followed the inviter into the next room.

Mifflin returned a couple of moments afterward.

"That's the way to draw him, Oscar," said Punkley. "Strike him on the vanity—break down his pride through his love of style, and you can make a lap-dog of him. These softies are all heavy on gratitude, and if you feed and clothe them, they'll stick to you like cats or monkeys."

Mifflin motioned the other to be cautious, and they sunk their conversation to a whisper, and continued to talk in this manner for some minutes, when the door of the room opened, and Hadley appeared, so perfectly changed that even the men that looked at him could scarcely recognize him.

The outfit furnished by Mifflin had not been partial. From boots to hat the change was complete. The crumpled and rain-stained shirt had been replaced by snowy linen; the coat, vest and pants were of fine black, apparently new, and fitted him as if they had been cut expressly for him; his boots were neat and polished; his delicate neck was encircled in a black satin necktie, and broad, turn-down collar, and his light hair, combed back from his white forehead and finely-featured face, gave him so genteel and intellectual an appearance that it drew an exclamation of wonder from Walt Punkley and his companion.

"Well, may I be blowed! If here ain't a change," said Punkley, with a laugh. "Why, Hadley, what a swell you are, your own mother wouldn't know you. Who'd ever have thought yon were so good looking!"

A smile of pleasure passed over the weak features of the man, but it was quickly succeeded by a look of pain and grief, and the lips seemed

to form themselves into the word "mother," but no sound escaped them.

"Blow me, Miff, if I don't have to get you to fit myself up natly, since you're so good in the dry goods and ready-made clothing lines," said Punkley, in his coarse, bantering way.

Hadley turned toward him evidently struggling between his fear and anger, but the former seemed to gain the day, for he addressed the two men in a mild and submissive manner.

"Why have I been brought here?" he said, "or how am I to repay this very acceptable and unexpected bounty?"

"Explain—elucidate!" said Punkley, lighting a cigar, and leaving the field entirely to Mifflin, though that worthy drew instructions from his eyes during the remainder of the interview.

"Be seated, Doctor Hadley," said Mifflin, indicating a chair. "The reason why I have sought this interview with you, through the medium of our mutual friend, is briefly this: My uncle is one of the wealthiest men in the United States, but of late years has been afflicted with disease, or rather a multitude of diseases, for he imagines himself tormented by all the ills that flesh is heir to."

"Caused by dyspepsia—hypochondria," said Hadley.

"Exactly," went on Mifflin. "But, my dear sir, the worst humors of this hypochondria are insane ideas of ignoring my existence and my claims upon him, and leaving all his wealth to some unknown woman and her child, both of whom must be in kingdom come these dozen years. In case they do not turn up in a given time, all goes to several public institutions that have as much need of it as I have for wings."

"And how am I to serve you in this?" asked Hadley, doubtfully.

"By curing him of his hypochondria."

"You must have great confidence in my skill," smiled Hadley, with a little touch of his vanity.

Mifflin looked at Punkley as if for instructions. Punkley poked his finger through a ring of smoke that he had blown, and gave a slow decided nod, but spoke not.

"I have," said Mifflin, significantly, answering Hadley's remark. "In the present case, where there's a will there's skill."

Hadley started at the tone, and glanced from the speaker to Punkley. That gentleman sat on a tilted chair, watching the curling smoke of his cigar with a grim smile.

"Mifflins' improved Proverbs!" he said, with a chuckle.

"I do not understand you, sir," said Hadley. "The man may be incurable—he may refuse to accept my services."

"*The man must be cured*, and he *will* accept your services," growled Wa't Punkley, from behind his pillar of cloud.

Mifflin noticed the bad effect the interruption had on Hadley, and hastened to cover it up by a rapid explanation, that, among his other

wild fancies, the sick man had become possessed of the idea that no one could cure him of his many ailments but an English physician, whose name had been revealed to him in a dream.

So strongly was he impressed with this phantasy, that he had written letters to England, offering the imaginary man of medicine his own terms, however exorbitant, to come to America and endeavor his cure.

"Hearing this," continued Mifflin, "and well aware that these letters would get into the hands of more than one blood-sucking quack who would impose upon the old man's lunacy and rob him, I intercepted them. Doctor Stonely is the dream-revealed name of this healer of all ills——"

"And you wish *me* to——"

"Exactly! You become Doctor Stonely. You give the benefit of your sterling knowledge to a man who is only too willing to be duped by pretending fools."

"I do not like the deception——" commenced Hadley, doubtfully.

He was interrupted by an impatient exclamation from Mifflin, and an angry burst from Punkley.

"Hang it, man!" cried the latter with a much stronger phrase than I care to use. "What are you dreaming about? Where is the deception? Is it not for good? Do you want to live in raggedness all your life, and die in the alms-house? Here is a chance that will never strike you in the shins again. No 'city reference' required—and you know how cursedly that want has kept you and hundreds of others back—when the mouthers about honesty drive their fellowmen to dishonesty by their own selfish fears."

Hadley wilted before the sardonic smile which accompanied these words. For Punkley's scorching speeches, false as the ideas were in most cases, had great weight on the weaker mind of the man.

Well, the effect was that Mr. Hadley was furnished with the intercepted letters as credentials and money sufficient to enable him to introduce himself in proper style to Jonas Coincraft.

"COINCRAFT!" gasped the man in astonishment, as the name fell from the lips of his employer and instructor.

The letters fell from his trembling hands, and were scattered on the carpet.

"Yes, Coincraft!" said Mifflin, wondering what new phase of nervous weakness was about to be displayed. "Do you know him? But nonsense, you must have heard of him. Everybody in the Union has heard of old Coincraft. Do you know him personally?"

"No—yes—that is long, long ago—I mean I have heard the name. Of course, ha! ha! how could I help. As you say, sir, everybody has heard of Old Coincraft. Why shouldn't I? Why?"

Both men gazed at him in astonishment. These disjointed phrases were jerked out spasmodically, his face flushed and paled alternately, and, as he stooped to gather up the letters he had dropped, his confusion was painful to witness, and the broken, forced laugh fell hollow and sickly on their ears.

Mifflin looked at Punkley in doubt.

"There is something strange and wrong here," he said, in a low voice. "He is unfit for this business, his nervousness will betray him."

Hadley sprang up from his stooping posture, with glittering eyes and firm, braced form.

"No!" he said, in a firmer and more energetic manner than he had yet spoken in. "No fear—no fear of that. I will go. I will personate this doctor. Ha! ha! Why should *my* knowledge of Jonas Coincraft render me less fit to be his physician? I take the trust."

Punkley looked at the man's glittering eyes and compressed lips, and slapping him heavily on the back, said:

"Well said, my bird of pluck, I see there's mettle in you. The old un's good for a perfect cure! Mifflin," he said aside to his colleague. "let the miserable devil keep his little secret, it dosent matter to us what it is, so long as it works into our hands. That man will do anything, from knife work to poisoning.

So the three parted.

"Now to see my prisoner and invent a means of getting rid of him!" soliloquized Mifflin after shutting the hall door on the other two. "Punkley never suspected this boys importance. Who the mischief would. I must get him away in some manner—*no matter what*!"

"Now to find this boy," muttered Punkley as he descended the steps into the wet street. "Who the devil would have ever imagined such a thing? Mifflin thinks he's smart. I'll get tne youngster in my clutches and play him off against my Oscar."

Honor among thieves.

Waffles in great demand. But would either be successful in the search!

Mifflin found his prison room empty, and Punkley knew no place to look for the object of interest—at least until the next day.

CHAPTER VI.

CHANGES—IN THE MIMIC WORLD—"THE DARING YOUNG MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE."

WILL WAFFLES, in all the glory of self-adorned, unconcious dignity performed double bass to the doleful music of the night wind in the chimney, and to all appearance, might have continued doing so to infinity. But that the royal circlet that crowned his noble brow rolled off in one of his nods and fell plump into the fire before him.

Thereupon the immense glass gems of the diadem showed a sudden resentment of the indignity by spitting in pieces at the first touch of the fire, and sprinkling the sleeping youth with their heated fragments.

"Holy smoke!" he yelled springing from his chair and striking into a spirited walk-around. "Where do you buy your fireworks?"

Then, in the first whirl of confusion caused by the forgotten strangeness of these surroundings, his eyes fell upon the rigid suit of armor which he had dubbed the "guv'ner."

"Look here, you old bloke!" he cried, "D'ye suppose I'm a Johnny Raw, that you can play off on even ye are boss of the ranche. There scratch yer doggerotype—take that!"

He struck the armor with the sword he had snapped up. It fell to the floor with a fearful clangor, and immediately there was a commotion below and the sound of many feet coming up the stairs.

"Good bye, John! Now I've did it!" he cried, doubtful what way to go. I must get time to hook it!"

He jumped to the window and opened it, but drew back from the gush of the storm.

"That's too thin, and so's my outfit," he said, shaking his head "Nary a budge. Be a man or a mouse! Die dog or eat the hatchet. What? 'Shall I play the roamin' fool and die upon the roof?' Not for Josephine! I'll stand upon my dig' and fight it out on this clothes line, if it takes the hull summer, as gineral Grant said in his great character of Mac-Beat!"

His gallant soul fired with the magnanimous resolution, he formed himself into line of battle, (a rather wavering line to be sure) and awaited the advance of the enemy.

The key was turned in the lock, the door swung open, and with a

dire clatter of FIRE-arms, (tongs pokers and shovels), the enemy advanced in solid column.

Two maid servants and a boy commanded by a very gaunt female supported by a very corpulent man.

"It's a thief!" chorussed the quintette.

"Awh-h-h! Cheese it! Draw it sinky!" exclaimed the juvenile intruder.

"Surrender!" exploded the stout gentleman.

"Dunno how, 'Taint in my line."

"Fellow!" cried the gaunt lady in a very precise style, "You shall be con-qured, you shall be giv-en up to just-ice!"

"Mad-am!" exclaimed Will adopting her style, and pointing to his snow-soaked heap of clothes upon the floor, "I have had JUST-ICE enough for Joe for one night."

"Sieze the housebreaker!" cried the portly man to the girls and boy.

"The first one of you tries it SEES a HEAD-breaker, you bet!"

"You shall answer for this at the Police Court," exclaimed the lady.

"Now, madam," said Will eyeing his showy costume. "Don't you think this would be a gallus rig to go COURTIN' in? That's so. Golly how the cops and beaks would stare. They'd want to sware a feller in on a box of tea or a bag of dates."

"Advance!" cried the portly gentleman. "Seize him! He is a trespasser and a plunderer!"

"Yer lie!" cried Will, indignantly. "I'm a Waffles and a newsboy!"

"You're a burglar!"

"You're another! I never touched yer burgles," yelled Will, going wild at the thought.

He threw himself savagely on the allies, and after a desperate struggle, routed them with true melo-dramatic bravery, and rushed down the stairs attired as he was, and preceded by the two maid servants screaming at the top of their vices. Words of enquiry sounded from below and he heard the frightened girls telling somebody—

"That it was the haythen devil that dressed in the attic, that had run amuck from eatin' opium and was tryin' to kill them all."

Upon this hint Will spoke.

He thought the terror of the people would certainly aid his escape and he immediately commenced to roar forth the most outlandish jargon of sounds he could invent.

Hardly, however, had his foot touched the floor of the lower passage when he was suddenly seized by a party of men. as oddly dressed and wild-looking as himself, and uttering just as frightful sounds. These persons dragged him from the house, and forcing him into a carriage drove rapidly off.

"I'm a dead beat," he said, mentally. Gone up the spout, sure, for if they dont send me to finish my musical education at the Sing-singing school up the river. I'm good for ninety days diamond cutting on the Island, or p'raps a brace of stretches at Auburn—mush and molasses, close-cropped hair and all that. Bah! only think o' me bein' nicknamed. 'The boy with the *Auburn* hair!' This is what a feller gets by putun' on lugs, and wanting to cut a swell with other folks' fixin's. I wonder, though, where the peelers got their suits, they're jest like mine; and I wonder where they learned that lingo? Sounds for all the world like a gang of coopers working on flour barrels. What if they wasn't cops at all, but a lot of real Chaynermen that think they've got a soft thing on me! Fancy they've captured the Tycoon of Japan, or the Grand Panjandarum of Timbuctoo—Wouldn't that be high though? Ha! ha! ha!

His enjoyment of his sublime idea was interrupted by the guttura, remarks of his companions who seemed to be pressing upon him the necessity of keeping quiet.

"Shet yer miserable mouts, ye batch o' watchmen's rattles!" he cried pompously.

"Have you no depreication of the privileges of a State prisoner? Have you no fear of the consekinces of this outrage upon the dignity of the bar-stangled-spanner? Ha! ha! How is that for *flag-rant*? Eh? old pigtail and chop sticks?"

Further answer or enjoyment was cut short by the carriage stopping beneath a blaze of calcium lights in front of a brilliantly lighted place of amusement. Will Waffles gazed at the place in astonishment, as the door of the vehicle was opened, and he was pulled out and bundled toward the building. It was evidenlty no police station. The front of it was highly decorated by flaring mammoth paintings representing the wonderful equestrian and acrobatic feats of the world-renowned troupe of newly imported Bedouin Arabs!

"Well, trot me dexter-ous if this 'ere aint a rum jink and no let up!" exclaimed the eloquent William. 'So I ain't to be a Chaynerman nor a Jap after all, but a performin' Arab. no less! It's the Circus, this here—and I was to bring Meg Merrilees to-night, and she's likely to come down on me like fury for a disappointing her. Lor' wouldn't she laugh if she only saw me a playin' Arab actor? I've a mind to go through with it if they don't smell a mice and give me the kick-out. I can act just as good as Little Tommy, or Little All right. Why not—I've rid pigs and goats enough, and I've been on the swings at Weehauken and the bars at Guttenburg. Whose afraid? Hooray!"

During this he was conducted into the actors' entrance of the pavilion, and heard the impatient thundering of the audience, occasioned by the delay of some expected act. As he was hurried along by his

jabbering captors, and heard their angry exclamations and the hurrying back and forth of desperate operatives, the courage of the boy in his whimsical design of playing out the character forced upon him, somewhat wavered, but he had no time for doubt or expostulation. Entering a dim, crowded dressing room, where a clown and the fairy of the afterpiece were eating fried oysters out of a blue pasteboard box, he had to bear a grand attack.

A tall man, in black clothes and tarnished gold lace, rushed at him with a heavy whip and a torrent of select English, while a half-dozen wild looking demons, in Asiatic costume, came down upon him with a burst of jargon that might have been produced by as many deserters from the Tower of Babel,

Part of his appropriate attire was quickly pulled off, and replaced just as speedy, by some other things still more gaudy. Then, amid the glare of music and the clash of symbals, he was suddenly pushed out into the blaze of lights and the gaze of hundreds of people.

He stood upon a temporary platform high above the saw-dust ring. Before him, suspended from the iron roof of the amphitheatre, were several swings, and another platform, similar to that on which he stood, was erected beyond the succession of swings at the other side of the arena. Below the swings ran a row of tressels with boards and matting on them.

A fashionable dressed man stood in the centre and loudly announced that the sight seeking world were about to be favored with the most astonishing flying trapeze acts by a wild young Ismaelitisn gentleman with a most unpronounceable name.

As the announcer ceased, great plaudits arose from the audience, and the expostulations of the frightened boy were drowned, the waving of his arms being taken for the Arabian expression of thanks for the reception.

"Oh let up!" he cried, "Who in Jericho would know me by such a name as that? You're a blower—that's what yon are!'

The wildest looking Arab in the party came forward to his side and bellowed in his ear something that he guessed by the energy of expression was a curse or a threat. At the same time the man below threw up one of the swings, and the boy involuntarily caught the bar.

"Well, if this ain't steeple-high, I'm a beat!" said Will. "I s'pose I'll have to break my neck afore they'll believe that I'm not the feller with the jaw-breakin' name. I s'pose I must swing for it. If I can only git landed safe on tother side of Jordan there, I'll make a bolt for the door. So here goes the last of the Waffleses, as the English

lord said when he was charged too much at the *Bell-and-Cleaver*. Who's afraid? Hoop! La!"

And away he went with a long sweep; but just as he left the pillar a small figure dressed very much like himself, and looking very similar, crushed its way through the crowd on the opposite lobby, with wild cries and gestures.

Answering cries of astonishment arose from the audience and the attaches of the establishment.

"That's my double, my clothier!" gasped Will.

As he swung up to the other platform, the real Simon Pure seized the swing, and, in Will's struggle for a footing, they both rolled off and swung away back again.

"Roost high, nigger! Count for game!" cried the unterrified intruder with high enjoyment of the excitement. "How's this for Siamese?"

But his companion, with an angry growl, sprang to another swing and the next moment they met in the centre with such force, that Will was hurst from his hold, and sent whirling through the air into the lap of the big drummer in the orchestra.

"Domino! How's that for high?" he exclaimed, dashing down the lobby for the street door, with the ushers after him, amid the exulosive laughter of the audience, and cries of:

"Stop him! Let him go! Stop him! Leg it, youngster!"

"Why, it's not a Chaynerman at all!" cried a stout woman in the audience near the door. "Why, you Will Waffles!"

"Ah! Hello, Meg, you here. 'Scuse me, I must away—cannot stay. Pressing business! Cut stick! You know how it is yourself!"

And he disappeared, dexterously dodging the ticket taker who thought to capture him, and out into the street.

CHAPTER VII.

A SMALL TEA PARTY—MRS. CODDLES SUGGESTION.

They found Will Waffles still in his fanciful costume, but with his head surmounted by a blue soldiers cap, roaring out choice bits of high-strung tragedy to the intense delight of a juvenile gathering crowded on the landing and in the room door.

"Hoity, toity! What's to pay here?" cried Meg, pushing through the excited audience and confronting her adopted hopeful, "What's to pay here?"

"'Base is the slave that pays,'" shouted Waffles striking a pompous attitude.

"What, has the boy lost his wits?" cried the bewildered Meg.

"Per-r-rish the a-thought! Time was when the wits were out the man was a-dead, and ther-r-r-e an end on't, but now they quit their-r-r gr-raves and r-r-ise again with twenty mor-r-tal gashes on ther-r-r a-heads to push us from our-r-r a-stools! How's that for tragic?"

Thereupon, as if to show his versatility the eccentric young gentleman stuck his arms a-kimbo and sailed away around the apartment in a fantastic *pas suel*, finishing up by a break-down step on Mrs. Coddles' toes.

"Oh, you young brute!" screamed the lady, If I catch you I'll throw you into the fire!"

"*If* me no *ifs!* But catch me *if* you can," he cried, eluding her grasp and dancing off again singing:

'Kate Coddle was a milkman's daughter
That lived upon the Weir,
And though we know she hadn't oughter
She sometimes takes her beer."

"You are an imperent young rascal!" cried the lady, with another attempt to seize him.

"Come!" cried Meg to the laughing youngsters in the door, "Get away childer, that's enough of this foolery. Send them away, Will, that's a good fellow."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Will pompously addressing the juveniles, "At the request of the management, I beg to state that the old thing does'nt work well enough to authorize the continuance of this performance. But we shall recommence regularly to-morrow evening, and give a grand family *morning* performance in the *afternoon* on Saturday. Balcony seats on the stairs at reduced prices. Liberal terms to Societies and Sunday schools. So *mote* it be, as Ben Butler said when he got a brick in his eye. So stand not upon the order of your going, but go it in the days of your youth! Now," he said, "turning to the women as the youngsters left the door. "How's this rig for style? Eh, cully? Doesn't this take the shine out o' ready made clothin'. Nothin' shorter, you bet!"

"Why, whatever have you been a doin' with yerself?"

"A doin'! I've been a endeavorin' to suspend the goose in an elevated posish, to raise myself a little in the world, I've been imbibing sherry wine and royal tastes and am as hungry as a royal tiger, so dish up the hash! Shell out! Would you see a felier a dyin' and never say 'turkey?'"

"Young man," said Meg in humorous reproof, "I think yer puttin' on air's above yer station."

"Above my station, madam?" he exclaimed, loftily, "Presumptuous mortal, you know not what you say. Thou knowest not how the ancient arrangement operates. The blood of princes may warm the heart of Waffles!"

"I uses charcoal to warm 'em!" said Meg scraping the frying pan, and Kate Coddle, forgot her trampled toes to laugh at Meg's joke.

"You're an unbeliever—a female Thomas. Listen, Oh, woman—I have discovered a trace to my paternal pa and maternal ma. That's what's the matter with Hannah!"

"You what!" exclaimed Meg, dropping the pan and staring at him with a strangely mingled look of doubt and pain upon her broad face, "You've found them! What! What traces."

"Dat am de question, I don't know no more'n John Brown, I've lost 'em agin!"

"You've been smokin' strong cigars and your head's not right," said Meg slapping a couple of slices of bacon into the pan, "That's it, it's strong cigars that did it."

"*Strong cigars!*" cried the boy contemptuously, "You must think I'm a muffin! Strong cigars—likely!"

He threw himself into a chair and was indignantly silent for some minutes, but when the little supper was spread and they had drawn around the table he yielded to the questions of the women and related his adventures of the night, and the glimmer of light that had shone upon the doubtfulness of his birth—and disappeared so suddenly.

Meg was more sorrowed at the prospect of him—upon whom she looked as her own son—being separated from her, rather than overjoyed by the chance of wealth lifting the boy above the hard fate which he had borne with so stout a heart.

Still his representations of the lavish style in which she could clothe herself—of the whole cargoes of black silk which he should import expressly for her own use—of the palatial residence which she should occupy when she had washed her lady-like hands of charcoal and turned her back on Waffles—all these things were as balmy to her wounds and she laughed happily at the prospect of her "white-headed boy" being an estated gentleman and driving her through the streets, to the admiration and envy of all the less fortunate members of her present profession who still struggled in the dessemination of apples and cakes.

And indeed when Meg Merry Lees turned her beaming eyes from the interested face of her friend Kate to her adopted son, seated like a prince in his gaudy robes bedizzened with spangles and lace, the old fireside tales of fairy wealth rose before her, and if one of the

boy's news-selling friends had suddenly rushed in with an extra proclaiming Will Waffles Emperor of the United States it would hardly have astonished her or caused her big heart to throb a bit faster.

Their hope of recovering the lost clue was not damped by the disappearance of the letter, as the boy knew the house to which he had taken it. He knew where Mr. John Chunk held forth and it was altogether too likely that that gentleman knew the address of the important missive and could explain the contents, as well as bear evidence to Will Waffles' being the person to whom it was sent.

Lastly, there was Bellevue Hospital. The patient might not yet be dead, or if so, might have left some further revelation in regard to this secret.

It was late now—a rough night too—and it was decided by the triumvirate (for Mrs. Kate Coddle had been appointed "of counsel"), that it was the best plan to let things stop as they are until the next day, when the whole available force, (including the Waffles' Sociables"), should be placed upon a war-footing for the rending away of this veil of mystery.

"And now, Mrs. Coddle," said Will, with his mouth full, "Now, that's all fixed ship-shape, let's talk about you."

"About me?"

"Yes. Where have you kept yerself? 'Whar d'ye come from? Whar's ye gwine to, knock a nigga down?"

"It's often ye desarve knockin' down, and it's enough you ought to get of it though you flighty young scapegrace!" said Mrs. Coddle, laughing.

"Oh the Arab, you mean!" cried the boy joining in the merriment, "Lord, didn't he git up his back stiffer'n gum Arabic, when he seed me scupping on his property? Didn't he go for me kiting but I retired as gracefully as a Sepoy blown from a gun. Reckon there'll be considerable drum mending agoin' on there to-morrow, and a new Dutch musicianer wanted. But that ain't the item. Where do you hang yer hoopskirt these days?"

"Well Willie, the place as I endeavors to do good in, is a fine place and a good, and it was more that than to see half-naked haythens tryin' to break their necks, and you as bad as the rest every ha'porth, that brought me out such a night as this."

"Sling it out, we've 'lent you our ears' repayable with interest haven't we Meg?"

"The place is Mr. Jonas Coincraft's."

"Jonas Coincraft. That's a rum lable, aint it? But somehow, I think I've heard it afore."

"He lives on Fifth Avenue."

"By Joe, that's where my old feller lived too!" said Waffles.

"Mr. Coincraft is stunning rich—but he's an un-wallid——"

"A what? Unvalued! Don't he value accordin' to his stamps?',

"Oh, bother, Let me go on."

"Go it Sall and I'll hold yer bonnet!"

"Well, Mr. Coincraft——"

"Yes, I know the old duffer—old wheezle-throat—him as does sickness by contract. *He's* a healthy garlic pill, aint he, though?"

"Just as you say, Willie," edged in Mrs. Coddle, "He does *do* sickness wonderful, as nateral as a man could wish for. He thinks he's a reg'lar Bellevue, with every disease in the whole blessed concern in his blessed body."

"Why don't you 'put him in his little bed,' and poultice him with sods and coffin-lids? They cure sickness beautiful—sure pop—waranted never to fail. Trade mark:—'I, said the owl—with my spade and shovel, I dug his grave.' Waffles and Coddle, Sole Agents for the U. S., New Jersey, and the Canary Islands. How's that for hickory?"

"Marg'et dear," cried the distressed Mrs. Coddle, "*Will* you stop that boy?"

"I'm fast," said the boy as Meg raised her goodly hand in warning, "fast as Noah's ark at low tide."

Then the voluble youngster went into a fit of deep abstraction. His thoughts seemed to be of a mathematical nature by the way in which he cut the bread and butter on his plate into geometric figures, and the severe manner in which he disposed of these toothsome demonstrations stomachward."

"Well—ah—well," said Mrs. Coddle, sagely, "We all has our failures—there aint no one of us perfect."

"What joke book have you been readin'?" said Will, *sotto voce.*

"Some has one thing—some another—" went on Mrs. C.

"Mr. Coincraft, poor man, ain't no deception to the rule—"

"Awh! Cheese it! Go for it! It's name is Gobble!" exploded Will swallowing a rhomboid and a triangle.

Mrs. Coddle looked appealingly at her friend and Meg, now entered into a warm protest against the impertinence and impoliteness of Master Waffles his interruptions.

The accused said that he "owned the corn," that he "caved" and that Mrs. Coddle "talked like a hand organ," or he was "a bilk," &c., &c., and Mrs. C. proceeding wordily to the end, it appeared that the mouse that caused all this mountain labor, was the fact that old Mr. Coincraft had made up his mind to establish a boy—a good, smart boy he must be—and honest. His duties were to be a sort of companionship for the invalid, and a general usefulness in the shape of errand running and the like.

So Mrs. Coddle explained how she thought that the place would suit Will, for he was smart and sharp, and there was fun in him that would enable to amuse the sick man, and Mrs. Meg Lees thanked Mrs. C. for her consideration, and endorsed the suggestion as it was coming on rough winter and not much to be made of papers.

At first Will Waffles rebelled fiercely against the idea of an arrangement that was so much opposed to his Arab-like love of uncontrolled liberty. But at length the united eloquence of the two women wrung from him a promise to go to the wealthy man's house the next day and "see how it was himself."

This decision was principally induced by the skilful representation by Mrs. Coddle, that the young gentleman would have plenty of chance to indulge in his theatrical tastes for the amusement of the sick man.

"And sensible, too," said Meg, and not to be philandering around the streets like a merry-andrew, and breaking his neck where he has no right.

So the conference broke up.

CHAPTER VIII.

JONAS COINCRAFT—DOCTOR AND NURSE.

The wealthy Jonas Coincraft lived, or rather existed, in a very large and very sombre house, far up on Fifth Avenue. It bore every appearance of being the residence of a wretched man.

The windows, dusty and cobwebbed on the outside, and heavily shuttered within, were very rarely opened.

The iron paling in front was deeply encrusted with rust, and falling to pieces, from lack of repairing and painting, while the ornaments that had formerly adorned either side of the steps, had gone, leaving but a vestige to tell that they once existed.

The little grass-plot within the railing was withered and grimy-looking, as if it had been put into the pound and suffered to die for want of nourishment.

Within—the greater portion of the house, for it was very large—was gloomy, dusty, and unused. The particular part with which we have to do, is reached by ascending the wide deserted-looking staircase. The closed-up way in which the house is kept, renders the passages very dark, causing one almost to have to feel his way, but enter-

ing a close-smelling room at the back. The dull daylight is seen once more through the dusty windows and thick curtains.

The apartment is small and dingy, and the furniture, which is too plentiful for the size of the room, is old-fashioned, heavy and decayed. An enormous curtained bedstead, a very large bureau, a much-used sofa, a ricketty centre-table, and some half-dozen uncomfortable-looking chairs formed the principal objects, except that before the wretched fire was a wheeled sick chair, and in this, propped up with pillows, sat Jonas Coincraft.

He was a little wheezling, wrinkled-faced person, with a restless peevish manner, and a large red night-cap. His feet were wrapped up to fearful dimensions, and propped on cushions. A pair of crutches stood, one on either side of the fireplace, and a small table at his elbow was actually covered with phials and pill-boxes, of every size, shape and color.

On the mantel-piece were solidly arranged hundreds of empty medicine bottles, on which the eyes of the old man were steadily fixed, as if he found pleasure and relief in contemplating those ghosts of departed doses.

At the present time he held an open letter in his hand, as if he had just been reading it.

"Coddle! Coddle! Coddle!" he cried, shrilly, his voice rising in pitch at every repetition of the name.

There was no answer for the minute, and, with great impatience, he seized a very large dinner bell from the floor beside his chair, and began to ring like a town crier, the peal waking up every echo of the house.

A very pretty young girl glided noiselessly into the room and stood beside his chair.

"What can I do for you, uncle," she asked.

"Do for me?" he cried peevishly. "You can save my life. You can spare me this—oh dear, my nerves—this exertion that nigh kills me. Why—why—can't some of you stay near me, when you know the way that I'm afflicted. Ugh — ugh! Where do you hide yourselves?"

"I was in the kitchen stewing the pot of herbs for your night-drink," answered the girl, in a low, meek tone.

"Well, well," bellowed the old fellow, clapping his hands to his ears. "You needn't hallo so loud. Have you got no feeling for my nerves? Ugh! Ugh! There's that accursed asthma at me again. Can't last much longer. It will soon be over. This neglect will kill me. Um! that pain!"

The wretched looking man actually writhed with the imaginary agony and the girl caught his hands and held them firmly, as women do to children in the hooping cough.

'My poor uncle, how you do suffer. What can I do to relieve you?" she said.

"Bah!" he cried. "What do you care—what do any of you care? O-o-o-h! It's all of self, you think, any of you!"

"Oh, uncle," said the girl.

"Fiddlesticks. I know you—all of you. Don't you know it is past time for my medicine, and there's that pint bottle of nervine to take, and the other half of the last box of pills—and—where's Coddle?"

"Gone to the druggists for the rest of the medicine. Her basket wasn't big enough to bring it all at once."

Some other of his many ailments seemed to seize the old man, for he clasped his head, and howled like a panther.

"I must not be alone this way any more. I will have a medicine carrier of my own."

"The druggist's boy——" commenced the girl but the invalid interrupted her savagely.

"Yes!" he cried. "The druggist's boy, 'and have him joining with the other brats in the streets to tamper with the things. Didn't they fill one of the bottles with ditchwater and brick dust, and nearly kill me.' Didn't they put nitrate of silver in my neuralgic liniment, and change one-half of my face as black as a negro's, for three months? Mightn't they even be induced by interested persons to give me poison? No, no, Rebecca. I'll have a good honest boy of my own—one without any idle pranks or nonsense in him—one of a retiring disposition and modest address—obedient, and imbued with a proper respect for his superiors—such a one must I have, Rebecca and such a one has Mrs. Coddle promised to secure for me."

"Yes, uncle."

"Has she got him? She said she had her eyes on one that would just suit me. One of refinement and intelligence. Has he come?"

"Not yet, uncle; he will be here in the afternoon."

"Good, so far good. Now, who brought this letter."

"The postman."

"Ha! The heartless wretch that rings the bell with ruffian hand. But I forgive him this time, for the news is good, good, Rebecca good!"

"I am very glad to hear it."

"Yes, girl, it is the long-expected messenger of peace—the herald of glad tidings—it informs me that the great Doctor Stonely, the wonderful man, whose existence was miraculously discovered to me in a vision of the night, is a real man—no myth of my diseased imagination, as the noodles said—but a real man, and a scientific light—that he has answered my summons, and has landed in New York to bring me back to lusty life."

Exhausted with such unusually long speaking, the old man fell back on his pillows in a strangling fit of coughing, and he was recovered from it by the ringing of the street door-bell. The girl, Rebecca, went to attend the call, and very soon afterwards returned, followed by Mrs. Coddle, as large as life, with a market basket as big, as the law allows, on her arm.

"Here's the medicine, and here's Doctor Stonely," she announced.

"Eh! God bless me! So soon!" exclaimed the expectant invalid springing from his seat with a strength and agility that augured well for the success of a doctor's attendance, when his simple name was capable of accomplishing so much. He seized his crutches from the fire-place, and turned to confront his illustrious visitor.

Of course the reader is aware that the pale, gentlemanly person that stood bowing on the threshold, was none other than Charles Hadley. He was very pale, the only addition to the costume, in which I before described him, being a pair of handsome, gold-rimmed spectacles, and some jewelry added to give importance to his appearance.

"The very man! My dream perfect!" exclaimed Coincraft, gazing in awe at the man. "I am most happy to welcome Dr. Stonely to my house."

"I am proud to acknowledge the honor you have done me by this summons," said Dr. Stonely, bowing over the palsied hand that was shoved past the crutch to clasp his own.

"Pray, be seated, my dear sir, my condition is so lamentably—ugh! ugh!" hubbled the patient, tumbling in a disorganized way into his pillowed chair, which rolled away, sliding him on the carpet in the manner of a bale of cotton dumped from a cart.

Dr. Stonely and Mrs. Coddle ran to the rescue, while Rebecca caught the chair, and brought it back to position.

"You are indeed in a bad condition, my friend," said the physician, at they raised him from the floor, and placed him in his chair. "We must proceed to business at once. You are a relative madam," he said, as he caught the earnest gaze of the young girl.

"Yes, sir," she said, in a retiring manner. "I am the niece of Mr. Coincraft."

"Why have you allowed this place to be kept so gloomily?"

The tone was severe, and it was very evident that the professional spirit of the speaker was getting the better of any selfish interests or sinister plans to which his circumstances had driven him. There was more manliness and dignity than he had before displayed in the presence of Punkley and Mifflin.

Rebecca was not allowed to answer, for both Mr. Coincraft and Mrs. Coddle burst in interruptively.

"What had she to say?" growled the first.

"Troth and yer right there. The divil a ha'porth. Who dare meddle with him?"

The old man purred self-satisfiedly at this compliment to his power and indisputable will.

"No one meddles with me," he said.

"I beg you to understand," said the doctor, "that I have full power here if I act at all. You are the housekeeper?"

"The nurse, sir, Kate Coddle, sir, at your sarvice."

"What are all these bottles?" he said, pointing to the lot which he had been examining.

"They are his medicines, sir."

"Take them away!" he cried, with a wave of his hand.

Coincraft gave a great start, and the nurse gazed at the new authority in horror.

"Take them where, doctor?"

"Anywhere out of this. Throw them out of the window. Tear down those dusty curtains, and let us have light. Raise the sash, and ventillate this mouldy room."

Could this be the same wavering, shrinking man that Punkley had so brow-beaten?

The patient gazed at the tyrant that he had himself conjured to his side, in such a manner as Frankenstein must have gazed at his self-created demon.

But he recovered and entered into a half angry expostulation against the destruction or removal of his long-time companions, the bottles and pill-boxes.

The physician was firm in his demand of absolute sway, and there is no saying where the altercation might have ended but for the entrance of Mr. Oscar Mifflin. who had for some moments been standing unnoticed in the room door, listening to the war of words.

"Good morning, uncle," he said, advancing.

The old man twisted his neck around, and looked at him with a scowl before returning his salutation.

No sign of recognition passed between Hadley and Mifflin, and when Coincraft grimly introduced them, their salutations were as

cold and distant as though one had just arrived from Nova Zembla, and the other from Alaska.

Ere many seconds, however, Mr. Mifflin had drawn Dr. Stonely to one side, and talked to him in a rapid, severe manner.

The consequence was that the worst, weak points of the man's character were in the ascendant once more, and the patiens's pets were allowed to remain, with the only provision that he was to cease partaking of their contents, for the present, at least.

So Charles Hadley was installed as house physician to the Coincraft Hospital.

As soon as the patient was left by Rebecca and the man, he called Mrs. Coddle to him, as if her presence was a blessing after that of the dream-created physician.

"Coddle, that man has shaken me to pieces. I am worse—much worse! Oh my! my head! Ha! what a twinge was there!

"Send the conceited jackanapes away again, back to the roast beef of Old England," suggested Mrs. Coddle.

"No, no, I'm afraid of him. He came in so strange a way. I found out about him so—so mysteriously. There is something in it—ugh! ugh! there is something in it. I'm glad Mifflin came—the first time I ever was glad," croaked the old man, casting a frightened glance over his shoulder. "He took him off me for a while, at least."

"Humph!" snorted Mrs. Coddle, "Take him off ye, indeed! The devil take his impudence for a beef-eatin' Sassanach, what brings him or the likes of him over here to bully over any person? Isn't it enough for them to be makin' Fenian martyrs at home, but they must come across the say, to put on their airs and take the bread out of honest people's mouths?"

"Oh! oh! oh!" yelled the invalid slapping his hands to his ears as Kate became more shrill and energetic in her denunciation of Saxon insolence, "Peace—peace—give us peace!"

"Troth I *will* give you peace, sir,—a piece of my mind, and that's this——"

"Death and furies cried the ear-tortured man clutching his crutches and hobbling desperately around the room followed by Kate Coddle, in full harangue, slapping her one big hand into the other with pistol-like reports.

"Oh you needn't death or furies anything about it, for the divil a death is in you, and your fury 'll do you no sarvice. I'm your nurse, and if I am, your nurse I will be, in spite of any 'haitch' 'ating Hinglishman of them all. Haven't I done my duty by you and earned my wage to the penny? Haven't I carried ye drugs by the basket load, and corked them for you by the cauldron? Isn't there enough herbs in the basket there now to fodder a horse for a day if they didn't make him sick?"

The man, flying before her, gave an affirmatory groan.

"When you longed for good quiet company and agree'ble, didn't I put on my things and hunt up Willie Waffles—as is the best naturedest and most smartest young man in the city of New York and I defy ye to find another. A young man that's genteely rared—as quiet and innocent as a sucking dove—and with a temper as smooth as a kid glove—a boy as would be a jewel in the company of a prince!"

"Awh-h-h! Dry up! That's too thick for plaster. Let's have a rest!" came a familiar voice from the room door.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW SERVITOR—A BATTLE ROYAL.

Coincraft and Kate Coddle turned at the same instant to see Will Waffles leaning against the jamb with his legs crossed, and a very large cigar in his teeth, and behind him, with shining face, Meg Merry Lees herself.

Meg had had considerable difficulty in replacing the suit of clothes which Will had left in Paradise, and his present outfit, with all her care gave evidence of violent appropriation.

He wore a flaming red shirt so much to big for him, that it bagged out in front like the breast of the scarlet ibis. His jacket had once enjoyed the dignity of coat-ship, but the skirts were curtailed and the sleeves rolled up to a proper shortness. The pants were very haggy and had also been shortened by the roll-up process.

He still wore the yellow boots of the Arab dress, (for Will was vain of the smallness of his feet), and had a soldier's cap, placed very much over one eye.

"Ha!" exclaimed Coincraft, balancing on his crutches. "Who Coddle. Who are these people?"

"These people," said Mrs. Coddle, assuming a bland, introductory manner—"these people, sir, is my friend Missus Marg'et Lees—"

Meg's great smiling face blushed red as she courtesied deeply before the man of wealth.

"And this!" said the ceremonious Coddle, "This is Master William Lees—"

"How is things? How's your health?" asked Will Waffles with a puff.

"What—what—what the plague do they want here?" cried the old man.

"The young gintleman that I spoke about," continued Kate, not heeding the interruption, "Him as they calls Willie Waffles."

"What HE!"

"I'm the feller you jist bet yer boots on that," cried Will with a long puff of smoke.

The sick man sank into his chair with a gasp.

"Coddle!" he exclaimed, what kind of a person do you bring here? Can this be the creature you meant?"

"*Missus* Coddle!" enunciated the boy, strutting forward with his hands in his pants pockets, and his cigar still in one side of his mouth. What kind of an old ourang-outang is this to fetch me to? Can this be the fossil wants me to hire him?"

"Oh, William, William!" cried Meg, giving him that dignified form of his name for the first time in her life, in deference to the presence, "You know you shouldn't—"

"Well. let the old bilk not try to come his jibes on me. What's he take me for?"

"Why, you impudent jackanapes!" cried ths old man, seizing one of his crutches viciously.

"Get out, you petrified mummy of a baboon," said Will witheringly, chewing the end of his cigar. "Don't you go to try your hoppity-clinch on me, or there'll be a scarcity of crutches, I can tell you."

"Leave my house," screamed the invalid, quivering from head to foot.

"Just when my baggage is checked, and not before—If I know it. I'd see you good lookin' first, and it'll be some time till that."

"Go, leave my house, or I'll have you arrested!"

"Go and put your head to soak—"

"Why you—"

"Take a drink of small potatoes, to cure you of the gout!" cried the boy, eyeing the bundled up feet with supreme contempt.

This stinging shot capped the climax, for the old man, forgetful of the gout, sprang up and struck at the boy with his crutch, crying:——

"You—you insolent ragamuffin!"

"Ragamuffin, yerself!" shouted Meg Merry Lees, rushing into the battle with rolled up sleeves.

Now ensued as lively a scene as war ever got up at short notice in a sick chamber.

Coincraft was laying about him with his crutch like Earl Warwick at the battle of Barnet, and Will, seizing its mate, entered into the full spirit of the scene in true terrific Bowery combat style.

"Nuff said!" he cried, "Duke's Motto, I'm here! All 'on hand' like Johnny Thompson!"

With a promptness worthy of General McClellan, Meg took possession of the table laden with medicine bottles and proceeded to shell the enemy over the Waffiesonian head.

This dreadful odds must soon have put the Coincraft army to flight, but Kate Coddle, seeing the danger in which her employer conscientiously threw her forces on the weaker side, and seizing the bottle packed mantel-piece as a base of operations, unmasked her batteries and opened a counter-bombardment on the enemies works.

The cannonade was terrific.

It was an *aw*-ful moment! as they say in the ten cent novels.

Pills and potions and liniments and lotions and plasters and blisters filled the war-like air.

The Coddle battery was the better served, but the "roaring-Meg," was more effective, for her shells were better filled and though her shots did go a little wide, some of her Greek fire was sure to reach the intended spot.

But every war must have an end and the Coincraft infantry was forced to retreat before Wafflesonian valor and retire to Fort Pillow in the chair, just as Doctor Stonely, Rebecca and a servant rushed into the room in alarm.

"Stop, stop!" cried the doctor.

But the blood of the artillerists was up and the shower of missiles continued.

"Stop them! Let us have peace!" gasped the old man from his pillow.

"Let up Meg! Come down, Kate!" cried Will, running between the combatants, "Let us have a piece—as General Grant said when he caught the fellers eatin' the mule!"

The women were caught and held, and the glassy shower consequently ceased, but the fray continued in the keen encounter of the tongues. Meg Merry Lees politely informed Mrs. Coddle that she was a pretty woman, and Mrs. Coddle modestly declined the compliment by remarking that Mrs. Merry Lees was a propagator of falsehood, together with many other little interchanges of courtesy which have not been minutely recorded.

"Put them out! Put them all out, Doctor Stonely!" wheezled Coincraft angrily, "Give that boy to the police!"

"Not any for, Aleck!" cried the boy turning belligerently toward the doctor.

The moment he did so a mutual recognition took place, and Will Waffles indulged in a long low whistle of astonishment, while the doctor made a frightened motion of appeal for silence and beckoned the youngster to one side.

"For Heavens' sake, be quiet!" he whispered, "do not expose what you know of me. You said you would like to see me get a good chance and I've got it."

"And I'm jolly glad of it, Doc, old boy!" said Waffles warmly. "Why d'ye think I'd let out on you so long as it's a square shake? No, siree, not by twenty-five row of apples. But *don't* you look gallus, though—Oh, no! You must a' struck ile heavy. Where'd you make the stake?"

"No matter now—this is no time to talk," said the doctor in a nervous manner. "Don't let the old man notice us, I will make it all up to you again."

He was turning away, when the boy caught him by the sleeve and whispered:

"Say, Dock, there's no cloven hoof in this here, is there? Nothing with Brimstone Punkley at the bottom, is there?"

"No—no!" said the other, hurriedly, noticing the fishy eyes of Coincraft fastened on him.

"Say, Doctor," said the boy, as a quick idea struck him. "If I play into your hand, you should do as much for me. I want to git a place nere, and you can smooth over this 'ere bottle-smaskin' shindy with the old buffer, so's he'll take me."

"I'll do my best," said the doctor.

"Square and level?"

"Yes."

"Honest injun! No go back!"

"No."

"O. K! Oll Korrect," said Will, as the doctor joined his patient and commenced to whisper with him.

"I reckon I smell an almightly big mice." soliloquized the youngster, as he went toward the belligerent ladies, "and I'm bound to trap him if I can. Old Cucumber-toes is in danger, and I'm in with him. For, as the old fellow in 'The Lady of Lyons' says: 'It's astonishin' how a man likes a man, when a man has fought with a man.'"

Space forces me to pass over the progress of the delicate diplomacy with which Hadley, *alias* Doctor Stonely, softened the natural anger of

Jonas Coincraft against the war-like Waffles, and of the equally difficult task of the boy in pacifying and reconciling the female combatants. It is sufficient to state that, within fifteen minutes, Master Waffles was an accepted retainer of the house of Coincraft, and the valorous ladies were united in the bonds of strong tea in the kitchen.

WILL WAFFLES' ADVENTURE, See Page 26.

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN CHUNK—A BRANCH OF PARADISE.

THE first action of Doctor Stonely after having calmed himself and seen his patient, was to despatch Will Waffles to a distant and obscure apothecary shop for some drugs he needed. The names of the articles were written on a piece of paper enclosed in a sealed envelope.

Hadley had seen the superstitious regard with which Coincraft viewed him; and, on the strength of this, had taken command of the house.

By his permission, the time allowed the boy for the performance of his errand was not limited. So, as Will had not forgotten the mysterious letter from Bellevue Hospital, delivered to him by John Chunk, or the night adventure during which he lost it, he determined to walk down and pass the scenes of his exploits on Fourteenth Street.

Carpenters were busy replacing the wood work which he had knocked from the roof of Paradise. He stood watching them for a minute or two, shuddering at the narrow escape he had from being dashed to pieces. As he turned to go, he saw a door open at a short distance, and a man came out. He imagined he recognized the figure, and immediately the thought of the curious yellow boots he wore flashed on his mind, and how readily he might be identified as the person who had carried off the Arab dress, and spoiled the performance at the circus. But while he hesitated whether to go back or onward, the man descended the steps and turned toward him and he recognized Oscar Mifflin.

"Hello!" he exclaimed to himself, "If it ain't that Warden Mifflin,—the fellar that keeps the Tombs in the garret—him as put me in chucky and treated me to a high roof ramble. Now, had I better run across his bows and hail him, or let him slide for the present? That's the question. Let him rip!"

He drew into one of the houses and sat down upon the steps. Mifflin passed by, with bent head and deeply thoughtful face, looking neither to the right hand or the left.

"By jingo!" exclaimed Will, "It was him I saw a comin' out o' old Coincraft's crib! Now, I ll bet that's where the benefit comes off. This Hadley fellar's there playin' English doctor, and Punkley and Hadley's as thick as tar. Punkley sent me with a letter to Mifflin—Mifflin goes to Coincraft's—Coincraft's rich, and needs a doctor, there ye are, gentlemen of the jury, all as straight forward as the house that Jack built."

And the young discoverer started along the pavement in a rapid gallopade sideways, like a crab, cracking his heels together in the highest enjoyment at his own acuteness.

"Then, what I overheard on the City Hall stoop! Punkley was on a lay where there was money to be transferred from an old 'un that had no use for it, to a young 'un that didn't mind goin' snooks and whacking up a slice with a friend. Now Mifflin's the fellar that's willin' to go snooks, and Old Gout-an'-asthma is the feller what has no use for it and Hadley's the fellar that's to make use of his knowledge of herbs and minerals, and Walt Punkley's the whacker-up and slice-taker. Straight as a bamboo! Trots along like the goat that went over the bridge for blackberries."

Left shoulder forward—another gallopade.

"They're gettin' up a nice little skin-eel game, and Hadley is to be elected, and Mifflin'll git the fortin' and Punkley'll make a haul. Ain't they a pair o' sweet scented sons o' Satan! Mebbie there won't be a double room red hot for them in Devil-burg! Go it trouts, the line's long and Will Waffles holds the real. Now for John Chunk's. But blow me if I haven't left his card along with Punkley's note in my other suit of clothes that I left in Paradise! My *other* suit o' clothes! Oh my! Eh. Cully, how's that for fresh? Two suits o' clothes—*three*, by golly, if I count the Arab togs at home. I'll start politician and make a break for Congress! Blow me if I don't!"

With this laudable determination the Great American soliloquizer started toward Houston Street, to hunt for the residence of John Chunk. He merely knew the street and had but a faint idea of the number, yet he skipped and whistled along as gaily as if he had not taken upon himself the sole responsibility of checkmating a combination of villains, and was on the most careless of rambles, instead of being in pursuit of information to lead him to the wealth that was to provide him with "two-forty" horses, and Meg Merry Lecs with "bang-up black silks."

Will Waffles was the true city Arab—the ever even-tempered, light-hearted soldier of fortune, ups never spoiled him, and downs could not daunt him. When he had nothing, he lived on hope, and when he was flush, he made up for the past by the double enjoyment of feasting himself and sharing with his fellows.

It was not likely that a young gentleman of his experience and resources could long be baffled by the vagueness of his directions, so after but few inquiries, he hauled up before a very small, very much crowded fancy store sporting a sign board as follows:

"JOHN CHUNK, FANCY ARTICLES AND CURIOSITIES."

The little low window was resplendant with large pearl shells reflect-

ing the light in many tints. Smaller shells, of every size and color, stuffed birds of brilliant plumage, foreign gleanings in the shape of pieces of gaudy clothing, and weapons of curious form. The varnished mummy of a pickerel was suspended by cords, and flanked by glass globes containing gold-fish, while beneath, a stuffed armadillo was contemplating a collection of daggers and yataghans like a war-like pig about to make a choice of weapons. On one side of the doorway stood an immense elephant's tusk, and the other was beautified by a shark's jaws spread wide open, the better to display its fine set of teeth. Within, coral and shells and gold-fish—gold-fish, and shells and coral were arranged in great profusion.

Will Waffles was dazzled by the beauty and variety of the stock and stood gazing at it in glorious forgetfulness of his mission.

"If this 'ere isn't a branch of paradise," he said, "You may fly me for a kite!"

What further soliloquy might have been indulged in by the young gentleman was forever hindered by his seeing a girl of very sonsy proportions appear at the shop door, shading her eyes from the sunlight with her hand to enable her to scrutinize him.

She was of very low stature and very full development. A very handsome face of the heavy order of architecture was framed in a mass of hair of a golden auburn hue, which was plaited into tails and hung far down her back like two rope's ends.

Her gaze at Will Waffles was not the ordinary, cold, unseeing glance that we bestow on the thousands that pass us in the hurry-scurry of life.

It was not the quiet, furtive look of watchfulness with which shopkeepers eye suspicious-looking young gents who linger long near their display goods.

It was a look of deep interest and earnest enquiry, and William Waffles, Esquire, was too good a student of human nature not to have caught the distinction herein set forth.

He was possessed of too susceptible a heart not to be flattered by such marked attention from so comely a maiden.

He gave his cap a smarter cock, threw his head to one side, and prefacing his speech with a crow, a smile, and a wink, said:—

"Why, sis, you seem to a' dropped on me. What's up? D'ye think I haven't paid my infernal revenue tax, or air you tryin' to estimate the bricks used in my construction?"

The girl did not answer, but looked him first straight in the eyes and then her gaze dropped and rested on the yellow, curiously shaped shoes that adorned his feet.

He noticed this and putting one little member daintily forth, said theatrically:—

"Ah, I see! Countess Crystalina! Lovely maiden of the gingerbread colored locks, thou art a lady of taste! thou art a lover of the beautiful! Thou art hefty on the slap-up—and fly on the fashion—and isn't that there shoe Fly, too? You bet! Shoo Fly! G'lang! how's that for high, Jemima Jane?"

Thereupon, the eccentric Waffles, evidently with the intent of displaying to better advantage the gaudy shoes that seemed to fascinate the lovely maiden, indulged in a neat little rally of clog-dance, singing a snatch of a popular medley altered to his own taste.

"If yer foot is pretty show it, let Lanigan bawl," he cried with an ending swagger. "So, Miss, you kinda admire these hoof-cases and are strucked with astonishment at the smallness of my mud-organs. Don't mention it, I pray, Lady Crystalina. Impossible to resist it. The admiration pays for the exhibition. Children under age, half price Where's J. Chunk?"

But, instead of answering him the girl turned and fled into the shop exclaiming in a frightened manner;—

"Father! Mother! Come! Come quick! Here's the yellow boots!"

CHAPTER XII.

THOSE YELLOW BOOTS.

"THE yellow boots!" exclaimed an answering voice inside, in a tone of great surprise.

"Blow the yellow boot!" cried Will on the threshold, "I'll git them blackened by jingo!"

"The very boots!" cried a very large woman advancing hurriedly from an inner room.

"Phew!" whistled Will, looking at the objects of interest, "I begin to think that I've kinda put my foot in it—or rather my feet, and I don't know whether to scoot or fight it out on this line."

But his doubt about staying or going was put at rest by the big woman rushing on him crying:—

"John! John! Here's the boots! Here's the thief! Quick! Quick!"

She bounced upon the astonished youth and dragged him into the shop at the same time that John Chunk appeared upon the scene, with

the stuffed form of some foreign fish in his hand.

"Yellow boots!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, John Chunk! Yellow boots, the great Arab Chief! That's my style, sounds like a dime novel, don't it, John Chunk?"

Mr. Chunk dropped the mummy he held upon the glass-case, and catching the boy by the arm, whirled him around to the light and scrutinized his face.

"Why it's *you!*" he cried.

"I'll go you odds on that, John Chunk!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Came to see you."

"How did you come by those shoes?"

"Come, come, and don't be axin' indelicate questions, ain't I got a right to blacken my boots yellow if I want to? Riddle me that," said Will, shaking himself free from Mr. Chunk's grasp and standing on the defensive.

"You riddle me *that!*" cried Mr. Chunk, pointing his stumpy finger to a small hand-bill, fastened to the edge of one of the shelves.

Will Waffles looked and saw the words, "Two Hundred Dollars Reward," in large type and underneath a setting-forth of the "daring robbery committed at number — Fourteenth Street on the evening of such an instant, by an audacious young man who was evidently a foreigner from the strange language in which he spoke, as the people of the house when interrogating him, could understand nothing, but that his name was *pancakes*."

Here Will burst into an uproarious fit of laughter.

"Well, smash my fiddle case!" he said, "if that ain't a good one! A foreigner and a pancake! How's that, John Chunk?"

"Then you acknowledge that this means you?" asked John Chunk severely.

"If you don't believe it, 'smell my boots,'" said Will in true mose style, holding up one of the tell-tale feet to the light.

"My boy," said John Chunk, deliberately wiping his forhead with the corner of his wife's apron, "I am very sorry indeed for this, for I had kinda taken a liking to you, you know, even you did leave me to pay for the drinks you called."

"Did I though? Well, now, that was smart, wan't it? Never mind, I'll make it up, we'll take '*monitors*' at my expense, (wiess beer glasses you know, chock full) at the first good crite we get to."

"This is no time for joking," said John Chunk seriously, "Listen!"

"Like a cat at a mouse hole. Heave a head!"

"The person that owns those shoes and his friends have dealings with me and I have dealings with them," said Mr. Chunk in a precise manner. "They sell me the curious products of their country, and I pay them in the curious currency of my country."

"*Curious* currency!" said Will significantly, "Not *queer* is it?"

"No, sir!" snapped John indignantly, "you had better young man to look to your own condition than to be pretending not to understand other people. These foreign men have put all the costume men and curiosity shops on their guard against buying the clothes you stole. Am I understood now? There, young man, is the reward, and the young man stands here—my prisoner!"

With these words John Chunk laid his great heavy hand on the boy's shoulder and gathered the jacket in his iron grasp.

"Easy, guv'ner, easy! Don't be goin' gettin' your bowels in an uproar!" said Will quite coolly, "We'll fix things all square in about a brace of jiffies. Don't get mad, John Chunk."

"Call an officer!"

John Chunk waved his hand to the girl and she steped toward the door.

"Stay! Jemima Jane!" exclaimed Will Waffles, and the fair fat creature paused

"Now, John Chunk, afore ye go a gettin' up a shindy, jest tell us how it is."

With much repetition and emphasis and many broken reflections on life, Mr. Chunk went over the charge of house breaking and robbery. the reward and his duty to society and so forth.

Will Waffles, in defense, went over all his adventures from the time he left John Chunk in the saloon until his grand performance in the circus. Mrs. Chunk and the ladies listened attentively to his story, told as it was in his peculiarly figurative and glowing style.

The young girl seemed especially interested, and strained to catch each word as Desdemona might while listening to the glowing tales of Othello.

"Look here, youngster," said John Chunk, in his short, bluff manner

"Go it, oldster, I'm all ears, like a corn-field."

"I took a liking to you at first and I'm inclined to believe you."

"Waffles is good stock, don't be afraid of investin' heavy," said Will

"This is rather a strange arrangement."

"Wonderful as photographing."

"But strange things will happen. These clothes must be returned, for these foreign chaps are as quick and revengeful as panthers. I had plenty of chance to find that out when I was a sailin' in the east. You must give back the things."

"Nuff said! Git my duds, and they can have theirs. There was my whole suit with to'ther letter I told you of—that from Walt Punkley you know—let them deliver unto sneezer and so forth, and I'll fork over tihr togs."

Mr. Chunk promised to forgo arrest and reward and arrange this matter and Will entered upon the business that caused his visit.

"There's that letter that you gave me, you know. The one with the blood on the cover, that was to take me to the old seed that was to give me money enough to make everybody rich."

"Yes, yes," said Chunk, "It is a pity, you should have held on to that."

"Well, well, there's no use o' makin' mouths at a lost kite. Thing'is, do you know this here address? That's what's the matter with Hannah!"

"No, somewhere on Fifth Avenue, that is all I know," said John Chunk.

"Then my chances of spondulix and Meg's chances of black silk look almightily slim, all gone up the spout as they say at Simpson's."

After awhile's conversation in which Mrs. Chunk and her daughter joined, it was determined that the best plan would be for Mr. Chunk and Mr. Waffles to visit the hospital and endeavor to see the man who had sent the note and get from his own lips the secret so unnecessarily enveloped in mystery.

But first Mr. Waffles had to take off the conspicuous yellow shoes that so much endangered his personal freedom and a pair of gaiters belonging to the Countess Crystalina replaced them.

"How's that for patent?" cried the youngster with a break-down step, "I guess, Jemima Jane, our cockroach killers were built about on the same last, Eh! Countess Crystal?"

"I'm not Countess Crystal," pouted the girl, "and my name is not Jemima Jane."

"Ah jest so! No matter, same thing. A rose by any other name, and all that sort of thing, my chunk of loveliness."

On reaching the hospital they found that the wounded man had been removed by friends, but no trace of his whereabouts could be discovered, so they were forced to give up the affair in dispair.

As they left the institution, they met Walt Punkley, just entering the gate. Owing, probably, to the change of garments, he did not recognize the boy, but passed by, knocking him from the walk by striking against him.

"What in thunder can *he* be up to here?" said Will Waffles to John Chunk, "that's the feller, Punkley, that was to have given me twenty shillin' for goin' with that letter I lost on my Arabian jamboree, I'll have more'n twenty shillins' worth out o' him afore I get through with him, or I'm a lizard, you see if I don't, that's all!"

"What about the other thing?"

"I'm a-fear'd that it's a mighty slinky show, boss, to catch that trail, as they say in the injun stories, but I'm agoin' to give it a square shake,

and see how it turns out. I'll git some of the boys—the Will Waffles Sociables—to assist me in spotting this feller and his pal. We'll keep them in sight until we git all down fine, and then go for them like black-and-tans."

"The Will Waffles' Sociables?" said Mr. Chunk enquiringly, "That's your own name!"

"You bet, the best I got. The Sociables is called for me. A gay lot now mind I tell ye, up to any kind o' game, my boys, from penny anty to electioneering. You ought to come to one of our meetings once, there's where you'd hear some speechin' that would make Ben Butler wink with both peepers and drive Wendell Phillips mad. Congress ain't a patch on it!"

"Indeed!"

"Pozzy fact! no jibe about it, mister, you'd better come to our meeting once."

"I would like it well, would they let me in?" asked John Chunk.

"Oh, yes, on my invite," said Will, consequentially, "I can interdooce you as an honorary member."

"An honorary member?"

"Yes, that is, you know, you'll have the honor of treatin' the crowd to lager and cigars, and providin' a silver-plated ice-pitcher or cruet for our next target excursion."

Mr. Chunk promised to fulfill the requirements of honorary membership to the "Will Waffles' Sociables" whenever called upon so to do, and having, as he had before stated, taken quite a liking to the boy, he accompanied him down town to endeavor to recover trace of the man who had sent him the mysterious letter.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SICK CHAMBER—THE SHADOWS OF REMORSE.

The imagination-tortured Jonas Coincraft dozed in his chair, starting fitfully and muttering at intervals.

His niece, Rebecca, sat with a book on her lap, gazing dreamily into the low fire whose light cast a warm glow on her lovely features.

The evening shadows had closed in, and she was unable to read any more; so memories of the past and dreams of the future conjured up fantastic images in the fire. We have all, at some time, indulged in the same pensive amusement.

Rebecca Coincraft was the daughter of a brother of the invalid beside whom she watched. She was an orphan. Her mother had long ago been carried to her long sleep in Greenwood, and recently her father had been placed beside the sharer of his trials and troubles, for with the strange freaks that nature and fortune so frequently play, David Coincraft was as poor as his brother was rich, and as generous as he was grasping.

The difference of character and wealth separated the brothers, for Jonas, gauging every one and everything, by the grand standard of the almighty dollar, looked upon the generosity of David as foolish extravagance, and his misfortunes as self-earned, and consequently turned a cold shoulder toward him and withheld the assistance that he was so well able to bestow.

David Coincraft was too proud to ask assistance from so grudging a relative, so he struggled along in his humble way until, after business undertakings had repeatedly failed, and the buoyancy of his spirit had departed, he was stricken with the sickness that left his child a penniless orphan.

Then, on his death-bed, with the black future of his child torturing him with dreams of penury and hardship, he sent to his wealthy brother, praying pathetically that he would take the girl to his house and protect her from the buffets of fortune.

So it was that Rebecca had become the attendant of the fretful owner of the Coincraft mansion, and in truth it was not a very pleasant task, for, in aggravation of the chronic peevishness of the man, every opportunity was seized by him to make her feel the bitterness of dependency by references to the misfortunes and poverty of her buried father.

Her reverie was broken by a soft tapping at the door, but before she could rise, it was opened, and Hadley, *alias* Dr. Stonely, entered with a noiseless step.

The girl's face flushed slightly as she saw him, for the handsome features of the man of medicine had made an impression on her young heart.

"I should have lighted the gas, Doctor," she said, "but I feared to disturb uncle, he is in such bad temper this evening."

"There is no need of more light at present," he said, standing beside her in the glare of the fire, "It must be very trying on one so young to attend so testy a patient."

"Oh, no," she said, smiling wearily, "I am not so much a martyr as you think, Mrs. Coddle bears the burden for me, and now, he says, he is going to have the boy to occupy this room with him."

"The boy?"

"Yes, sir. He is afraid to stay alone. He has strange fancies that he has ghastly visitors that come to threaten and torture him. Sometimes he startles us in the night with screams of terror, and gasps of ap-

paritions, and robbers and murderers, who seize his wealth and threaten his life."

The face of the man became even paler than its wont, and he turned his back to the fire, to hide this effect from the girl.

"These are strange fancies, a portion of his morbid disease," he said "Is there anything in the past, madam,—can you think of any event that would be likely to leave bitter memories—to create remorse?"

The patient gave a restive movement and the girl paused with opened lips until his heavy breathing told that he slept.

"Yes, doctor," she said, in a whisper, so low that he was forced to lower his head near her's to hear it. "I have heard my father speak of it. His daughter—my cousin—I don't remember her, but they say that she was very beautiful.—she was very young at the time I speak of, and fell in love with one of his clerks—he was in business then—an Englishman as young and handsome as herself."

"Yes—yes!" said Hadley, in a strangely agitated manner, I have heard—"

"You!" said Rebecca, in astonishment, "I thought you had just arrived from England."

"Yes, madam, yes, I would have said that I have heard of something similar that makes your story interest me much. Pray proceed. But tell me first, did not this lady—your cousin—that is—I mean do *you* not bear a great resemblance to her?"

The girl, surprised by his confused, stammering manner, drew back to scrutinize his face, and was startlad by its yearning, careworn expression.

"They say I am very like her," she said, "but I am astonished that *you* should know of it."

"There is a portrait in the room allotted to me—" he commenced.

"Yes, it is her's!" interrupted Rebecca, "that was her room. It has never been occupied since she left it until now, by yourself."

"She left it?" he said questioningly.

"They were both very—very—young," she resumed, "they did not think of difference in station—they did not dream that wealth was of more estimation in the eyes of the world than hearts and happiness. They made know their passion to her father and he spurned the appealing lover from him. He cast him out from his employ and forbade him ever to see or speak to his daughter more."

Rebecca fancied that the doctor's breath came shorter and quicker and that she heard his teeth grate behind his light moustache.

"Yes, yes!" he said impatiently, and involuntarily, she went on at the word.

"Love was stronger than prudence or prejudice," she said, "and the young couple were privately married. But their secret was soon re-

vealed to uncle, and in his fury at the discovery, he drove his daughter from his house. They had hard struggling, the young man's employment was precarious: uncle was relentless in his persecution and his wealth and influence to enabled him to have the young husband discharged from every situation he obtained."

The girl paused as she heard a muttered imprecation and saw the sudden clenching of the doctor's hand, and the vindictive glance that he cast at his patient.

He knew that he was observed—and, with a strong effort, recovered the appearance of composure.

"I listen, madam; pray proceed," he said, drawning a chair and seating himself by her side.

"At last, through actual need," continued Rebecca, "my cousin's husband was forced to accept the position of surgeon's assistant on an East India bound vessel, and leaving his wife the money advanced to him, he parted with her, never to see her again. A short time afterward news came that the vessel had been wrecked on the coral reefs and all on board her perished. Even in the height of her distraction at this heart-rending news, her child disappeared, stolen from its cradle in her wretched room She blamed this on her father, and rushed frantically to him to beg for the return of her infant boy. He disclaimed all knowledge of it and offered, now that her dispised husband was gone, to take her back to his house. But she refused to listen to him, and left his presence, crying frantically for her child. Next day, her body was found floating in the East River, and it was only when her father recognized her in the morgue that the full extent of his cruelty struck home to his hard heart, and he endeavored vainly to atone for the past by instituting a dilligent search for the missing child."

As the young girl finished this recital her gaze fell upon the features of her listener. The big tears stood glistening in his eyes, but the brows were lowered and contracted and the teeth clenched tightly, while the breath came and went, short, hot and gaspy.

"You are agitated," she said.

He started from his abstraction and clenched his hand as he hissed through his teeth:—

"Yes, Why not? Who could help it? Why should such men live? Curse their flinty hearts? why should they live?"

The girl started from her seat in surprise and he caught her by the hand.

"Stay, madam—Miss Coincraft," he said in a low, rapid tone, "I beg of you to excuse my—my thoughtlessness, I am peculiarly sensitive to tales of human suffering, especially where the demon—Avarice—is set up as the golden calf to be worshipped by man. Your story has had a strange effect on me, I seem to have known the poor, unfortunate

lady, and can imagine I see her when I look at you. No wonder this man has horrid fancies, no wonder that remorse gnaws at his heart—that the cold, wet face of the suicide should haunt his dreams, and the wail of the orphan, should break his rest. It is retribution—it is the vengeance of Heaven!"

Before the frightened girl, could speak in answer to the impassioned speech, they were startled by the sick man suddenly springing erect in his seat with a wild, inarticulate cry, and his eyes fastened on the vacancy before him.

"Vengeance!" he cried, "Who speaks of vengeance? Take her away! What brings her there? The grave is her place. Throw the pall over the face! Close the coffin-lid—*I* cannot look at it."

"Uncle! uncle! What is the matter?" cried the girl running to him

"Rebecca!" he said, in a wild manner, "Rebecca, I have seen it!"

"Who! What?"

"*Her*—I have seen her. By Heaven, I have seen her!" he said in a hoarse whisper that rattled horrible in his throat.

"Be calm, uncle, be calm," said the girl, "you have only dreamed this."

"Dreamed, you idiot, dreamed," he cried, "a likely thing, am I ever dreaming of this horrid sight, away, away!" he cried, pushing her savagely back from him, "You are too like her, you bring the past before me, Away, Away."

As these words rattled from his skinny throat he bent toward her with clenched hands and she drew back from him in fear.

On account of the room being only illuminated by the dull glare of the fire, Hadley had remained unnoticed, but now as he advanced into the light, the old man gave a startling cry and falling back into his pillows, lay staring at his pale face.

"Miss Coincraft," said the doctor, "I beg you to retire. This is one of his fantasies, I will give him a sleeping draught and put him to bed. Send the nurse with lights."

Rebecca obeyed, but turned at the door to look back. The doctor stood erect, regarding his patient with an intent gaze, in which she thought she could trace the malignity which had marred his handsome features a few minutes before, Jonas Coincraft sat in the same rigid position, regarding Hadley with a fascinated gaze, like a person under the influence of mesmerism

CHAPTER XIV.

FEARS AND IMAGINATIONS.

Closing the door of the room, Rebecca Coincraft passed along the hall which was already lighted. As she did so she saw a servant open the street door and admit Oscar Mifflin.

He inquired for his uncle's health, and said he wished to speak to the doctor in regard to it. In a shrinking manner the girl answered that the patient seemed to be somewhat worse; that the doctor was at present with him, but would probably be at leisure to grant Mr. Mifflin an interview in a few minutes.

Begging him to step into the parlor, she hurried down stairs to where Meg Merry Lees, who was now a constant visitor at the house, and Mrs. Kate Coddle, were evincing their appreciation of the larder and celebrating the declaration of peace between them by the most brilliant gastronomic feats.

Miss Coincraft purposely avoided Oscar Mifflin, for that young gentleman, eager about the bequest of the old man's wealth, and knowing that he and Rebecca were the only heirs, near of kin, then living, and that he was no great favorite with his uncle, had determined on the brilliant plan of courting and winning his fair cousin, so that whether the wealth was left between them or all to her, it would flow into his hands. But Rebecca well knew the heartless, mercenary nature of the man and looked upon his addresses with deserved contempt.

Kate Coddle was in the act of lighting a hand lamp when the loud peal of the bell which the patient used to call attendance startled them.

"Lawks a goodness! What's the rumpus now!" cried the nurse hurrying up, followed by Rebecca.

They passed Mifflin and the doctor talking in the hall, and entered the room.

"Shut, shut the door!" cried the old man with a tremulous croak, "Why, why did you all leave me? Why do you all desert me?"

He had got into the big omnibus of a bed, and was sitting, propped up by pillows, trembling from head to foot, his shrivelled jaws chattering as if he had an ague.

"Stay near me," he said to Rebecca. "Do not let them come near me, keep them away!"

Weak and nervous as she was herself, the fears of the girl was merged

in the more abject fright of the object of her care, and she petted, coaxed and tried to reassure him as a mother might calm the inquietude of a fretful child.

"It is nothing she whispered in his ear it is only fancy and will pass away."

He swayed his head to and fro in palsied negative, and repeated after a pause:—

"Never, never! the sights will come before me, the sounds will ring in my ears. The sight of—of—her, you know, I fear to name her lest she rise up before me. The sight of her as I saw her on that horrid marble slab—the prayer for mercy, the wail of an infant and the splashing of water. Oh-h-h! I hear it now, I hear it now."

"Be calm, it is nothing but your fancy. The doctor will explain it to you."

"Hush!" suddenly whispered the old man, "Beware of him! keep him from me, he frightens me!"

"Who?"

"This Stoneley, this doctor, He is not safe, not safe, I fear him! There's danger in his eye—he is my enemy!"

"But why? why should he be?"

"I do not know! I fear him! He threatens me. Speak low!" he whispered fearfully, "he may be listening!"

The young girl shrunk back from his hissing breath but he clutched her with his bird-like claw and drew her close to him, until the rattling whisper fell with an unpleasant, tickling thrill upon her ear.

"Keep him away," he said, "Do not let him near me."

"No, no, I will not let him near you," she said, assuringly, "But why do you fear him, after bringing him so far?"

"That's it—that's it!" he whispered, hoarsely. "There was something wild and strange about the manner of his coming. Which, think you, it could be, a machination of the Evil One, or a judgment of Heaven?"

"God be good to us! How he raves!" said Kate Coddle, devoutly.

"Why else should I dream of his very face, of his very name, you old idiot?" cried the man savagely, "I do not know why else I fear him, I sometimes think it is Richard York—her husband,—that perished on the coral reefs—perished through my cruelty as she did—as she did."

"Be calm—be calm!" said the girl.

"Keep him from me!" he cried clinging to her, "I do not like his eyes—they burn me through—there's vengeance in them!"

"You are excited, uncle, nervous," said Rebecca, soothingly, "You need rest, take some more of your medicine, you spilled the last."

He took the medicine mechanically and lay back on the pillowa gazing at her steadfastly.

"There, bless your heart, try and get a wink of sleep," said Mrs. Coddle smoothing the pillows, and sett ng the stand close to the bedside with a bowl of cordial on it.

"Do not leave me," he said.

"No, dear heart, no, we will stop with you," said the nurse.

"Wait!" he whispered as a sudden thought seemed to strike him. "Where is the boy—the young boy I hired?"

"The darlin's down stairs takin' a cup o' tea to brighten him up. Sure the poor child has been run off of his feet since he came here," said Mrs. Coddle, volubly.

"Let him stop with me, and you can both go. Let him stop with me he can protect me best. I noticed them when they thought I didn't. This doctor is afraid of the boy, call him, call him immediately."

"No need o' callin', Duke's motto, I am here, all on hand, like Johnny Thompson."

All three turned in surprise to see the heavy curtains at the foot of the bed move, dislodging a heavy cloud of dust; and Will Waffles stepped out and stood before them.

"Why, whatever was you doin' there?" asked the nurse in astonishment.

"Doin'? Doin' detective, a freak of genius, pursuit of knowledge under bed-curtai s, desire of an enquiring mind to get into the hang of medicine mixin'. There's a couple of gentlemen playin' a game of hot butter and blue beans, and I'm bound to have a hand in, and see how the old thing works."

"What do you mean, sirrah?" snapped the old man, impatiently "Speak plainly."

"Oh shut yer hopper, and dry up!" said the newly engaged servitor, "Ain't I speakin' as plain as a fog horn? What are you trying to git through you?"

"You torment him," said Rebecca, as the old man gave a groan and an uneasy movement, "Say what you mean in as few words as possible."

"All correct, miss, nuff said, Goods put up in parcels to suit purchasers, all I want to say is that I have good reason to think that there's more than one feller ready, able and willing to help this old buffer's tabernacle of clay to dissolve to its original mud. I've got my peeper on the dealing man, I intend to order him up and go it alone—and if I don't make a march you may call me a haythen chinee. That's my old-tomato (*ultimatum.*) Trust yerself to Will Waffles and you'll find him the cheese."

The old man gave two of thewomen a summary dismissal after they had arranged for Will to call them if anything unusua. should occur. Rebecca retired to her chamber, and Kate Coddle rejoined her friend Meg Merry Lees in the kitchen, for the little thunder storm between these worthy ladies had only purified the social atmosphere and rooted their friendship more deeply than ever.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE WATCH—CHLOROFORM.

"Now, guv'ner," said the boy, as soon as he was left alone with the heavily breathing patient, "we'd best git to work and lay our plans before your Atlantic Cable medical chap comes back to settle you up for the night; for he will come, as sure as limburger's sweet scented."

The patient was gazing at his self-constituted protector with goggle eyes.

"What is all this mystery my boy?" he asked.

"Don't ax me no questions and I'll not tell you no lies. Case not fully ripe yet, as Supe Kelse would say. Needs more working up, professional confidence must not be violated. How's that for cop-ish?"

"You're a curious boy."

"Curious as a quarter with two heads,—always sure to come right side up with care," said Will, inspecting the furniture of the room.

"I insist on knowing the cause of this behavior definitely," wheezled Coincraft, following the movements of the boy with his great mother-o'-pearl eyes.

"Pile on insistin', guv'ner, and see what you'll make of it."

"Is it burglary you expect?"

"Not much," answered Will, carelessly.

"What is it then?"

"Well, that's jest what I havn't exactly dropped on yet; and if you'll jest shut yer medicine-trap, and lem-me alone, I'll tumble to it all the sooner. After consideration, though, I'll say this to satisfy you, and set your mind at ease—"

"Yes—yes—I listen!"

"I kinda think there'll be a little bit of housebreakin' thrown into the bargain this swop, jest to carry the game and make things lively."

"My God! Speak plainly!" exclaimed the patient, raising himself on his elbow, "your words are confused and contradictory."

"Mixed as sausage-meat. That's where the beauty lies. What! d'ye expect a feller to play detective and talk like other folks? Oh, no! We're paid for mixin' things—that's where our stamps sprout from, old man."

"But—but, boy, if there has been a burglary planned against my house, why did you not give the alarm? Why did you not inform the police and get protection?"

"Awh-h-h! what d'ye take me for? Do you think I want to git copped for a witness, and jugged for a half year on a darned sight worse grub than the fellers I detected? Not if I know myself."

"But—but—but—"

"Now, look here, old man, there ain't no mortal use o' yer tryin' to *but* agin' me, so jest oblige the company by shuttin' yer pill-box, goin' asleep, and leavin' all to your humble servant. There's goin' to be my shake-down,—that lounge. You must lend me a quilt, I can take a pillow from yer chair. Chair would be the most comfortable only I want to watch the enemy's movements from entrenchments. Don't disturb yerself. This 'll do."

With the words, the consequential youngster seized one of the counterpanes and pulled it off the sick man's bed, and, before the owner had time to express either disapprobation or astonishment, the invader of the sick chamber had rolled himself up like a cocoon in the abstracted quilt and was stretched in perfect stillness on the big sofa.

Owing to his soft breathing, and the deep shadow of the portion of the room in which he lay, no one would have imagined that a human being was there, or that sharp ears and bright eyes were intent upon every whisper of night-sound, and every flicker of shadow caused by the currents of night air.

But restlessness and terror had seized upon Jonas Coincraft. The stillness added to his apprehensions, and he longed for the reasuring snore of his usual watcher—Kate Coddle. At length the oppressive stillness overcame him, and, twisting his gaunt neck around in the direction of Will Waffles, he croaked, in a horse whisper:

"My boy—hi, boy!"

"On deck!" whispered Will immediately in return, "Thought you was in the arms of Murphy a half hour gone. What's up, old top?'

"Hadn't you better get the fire-arms?" said Coincraft. "There's a blunderbuss, loaded to the muzzle in the closet in the corner."

"Well, boss, to tell you the truth, I ain't much on the shoot, and blunderbusses loaded to the muzzle ain't no children's rattles. They scatter shot like fury, and I'd be as like to pepper you as the bur'glars every bit."

The old man fell back on his pillow with a groan of desperation.

"But," went on the boy in a comforting tone, "as yer bent on it, I'll git the machine, and do my level best if need be. Only one thing—if me and the blunderbuss makes a blunder, boss, and pickles your carcass, you mustn't go a raisin' a rumpus about it, and sayin' we done it a purpose. So here goes for it and mind yer bargain."

"No—no!" exclaimed the old man, dragging himself to a sitting position, and holding out his claw-like hands appealingly. "Do not touch it! Leave it alone, you horrible creature! Leave it alone! Go—go—leave me—I'll run my chance. Go!"

"Can't see it, boss. I'm engaged for the trip, and I'm bound to run it through."

The answer already trembling on the old man's lips, was cut short by a footstep in the passage, pausing at the door.

The boy suddenly and noiselessly disappeared to his liar, and Coincraft fell back frightened and exhausted on the pillow, closing his eyes as if he were sleeping.

The room door opened and Hadley entered. He was paler than usual and his face wore a wild, troubled look, while his usual nervousness of manner was now painfully perceptible.

After a quick searching glance around the apartment—a glance that penetrated every corner, even to the shadow where the youthful watcher was hidden—the doctor approached the bed, and lifting the table lamp with a trembling hand, gazed long and steadfastly down at the troubled face of the patient, that twitched convulsively in the light.

"He sleeps!" he muttered. "But such a sleep—as troubled as my own. But *I* was driven by desperation to the crimes which gnaw my rest. *His* were voluntary—selfish—his created mine."

A long pause, with a gaspy motion of his lips, from which no articulate sound proceeded, then, with an irresolute movement, the man took a small vial from his pocket and held it between him and the light.

A very small vial, nearly filled with a sparkling, straw-colored liquid, as Will Waffles noticed.

"Here," said Hadley, shaking it. "Here is the instrument of revenge, the refuge of despair—the giver of peace to the troubled heart. This," he said, with a bitter smile, "is the only great result of my eastern voyage, begun in hope and ending in despair—this petty vial, giving the power to murder with impunity, or to leave the world at whose table I am no longer a welcome guest. But two drops of this in his cup would send that wretched being from the self-imposed troubles of this world to the punishment which he has so well earned in the next."

Even as his hand was held doubtfully over the cup of wine and water on the stand, the patient gave a cry, and, with a quick movement opened his eyes, and gazed wildly into the pale face of his physician.

"Who are you?" he cried. "Why do you haunt me? What have I done to you that you should follow me thus?"

Without speaking, Hadley quickly replaced the fatal vial in his pocket, and pulling out his handkerchief uncorked a bottle that stood upon the table, and wet the corner of it with with the contents.

"Here," he cried putting his hand on Coincraft's forehead and pressing his head back to the pillow from which he had started up, "You are feverish, you rave, you need rest."

The old man endeavored to struggle and cry out, but the handker

thief was pressed upon his mouth and nose, and as Will Waffles threw aside the quilt that covered him and rushed toward the bed with the levelled blunderbuss, the struggle had ceased, the bony limbs were relaxed and helpless, and the usual wheezling rattle was replaced by a soft and regular breathing.

"Come, you let up on that!" cried the boy covering Hadley with the gun, "Let up, or I'll ventilate you for a seive!"

"Ha, you!" exclaimed Hadley in astonishment, "What brings you here, what do you want?"

"Well, if you hain't got a cheek!" cried the boy, "Wan't I hired to attend the old man here? that's what brought me, and you know it. Didn't I let up on yer make believe English-doctor-dodge when you said you was goin' to act on a level and here yer a comin' chokin' and poisoning. Blame ye, I've jest a mind to blow you into the middle of next week."

"Hold—hold!" exclaimed the man, holding up his hands in a frightened manner, as though he would have held back, the threatened discharge, "You are mistaken—you do me wrong—I was but meditating the consequences of the deed I was engaged—no, forced to do, but I did not intend to do it. No—no! I have had enough of crime—enough of crime!"

As he faltered these excited words, he sank into Coincraft's chair in an abject tremor.

"Look a here, mister," said Will Waffles, lowering the muzzle of the weapon at a beseeching motion from the man, "How do you expect me to swallow yer yarns when you've been a pitchin' lie into me like a soap boiler? What do you mean to tell me you was a doin' with yer handkerchief over the old seed's mouth, if you wasn't a tryin' to muzzle him off?"

"It was only ether to give him rest and make him sleep," said Hadley, eagerly, "I had no intention of hurting him, I was rather about to kill myself."

"That be blowed for a yarn—you can tell that to the horse-marines for the sailors won't believe it. You kill yerself! why you're shakin' like an airth-quake at the sight of this old fire-pump."

"Boy, boy!" cried the man, impressively, "You are far too young to understand the changes wrought by thought, the empty fancies that raise to heroism or the trifles that make cowards of us all."

"Go it, old boy! I'm yer backer!" cried the boy, coming to a mock admiring "stand at ease."

"My God, my God!" cried the wretched man in a sobbing manner, "Why did fear and weakness ever tempt me to put myself in their power? Why did the sea spare me to become a villain? Would to heaven, that sympathy had made me die when she died. That I had

never lived to dishonor the dead and disgrace the living. My boy—my boy—!"

Ending this speech in an agonized tone he dropped his head on the cushioned arm of the chair and buried his face in the chloroformed handkerchief which he still held.

The boy, whose heart was always open to the cry of trouble, stepped toward him and laid his hand on his shoulder in a kindly way.

"Blow me if you aren't a strange card; but I believe there's good bottom under yer surface mud, I believe in you, wake up and be a man."

A shuddering groan proceeded from Hadley, and Will, dropping the gun, endeavored to raise his head, but, with a convulsive start, the man sprang from the chair and fell back into it again, with his face overspread by a corpselike ghastliness, turned up to the light.

The handkerchief thrown from his hand fell over the arm of Will Waffles, and that young gentleman, holding it suspiciously at arm's length, said:

"Well, if the blamed-flat hain't gone and laughin'-gassed hisself with the hanka-fitch, call me a flat! Why—why—Will Waffles, yer in luck—a reg'lar Barnum—started in the show business without money and without price. The Arab business was good, but neck risking—this here is safe and easy. Two sleepin' beauties ready made, a whole house to exhibit in, and drugs enough to run a quarantine boat How's that for Erie? But p'raps the poor devil's a gone goslin! Let's see. He ain't much on the breathe, Lord, if they should both slip handcuffs and run, what a fix I'd be in. Two dead men and no coffins on hand. Phew!"

Frightened at the peculiar situation in which he was placed, he commenced by all the means in his power to endeavor to restore Hadley to consciousness. He bathed his head and wrists in cold water, and forced wine between his lips, but with no other effect than to convince himself that the man was not dead, and at last he sat down, fatigued and perplexed to await the action of nature.

"Darn him," he soliloquized, "he must soon git round. If I raise the folks they'll start an alarm and I'll be copped before you'd say Jack Robinson, 'sides I kinder like the feller, whatever in the world it's for, and would hate mortally to see anything happen to him. 'Sides, there's Mifflin and Punkley and their share in this little game, Lord, what a daw he was to take up with them two hawks, fitter to play Desdemona at the Dramatic Hall, 'sides there's John Chunk and the Sociables. Wonder why I've took such a likin' to the laughin' gas feller. He ain't nothin' in my style. He's as weak as watered sassaparilla, and cries like a Tombs shyster. Guess it's coz he's in trouble—and blubbers about a lost boy. Who knows how often *my* old man—whoever he

was—has pumped his bilge-water about me? Wonder what this laughin' gas arrangement on the hanka-fitch is like? Can't be any harm to jest take a little weeny snifter. Steady—steady—old boy. You know how the old thing works. Best let well enough alone."

But, for all this his curiosity overcame his caution, and after surveying the mysterious piece of linen at a safe distance for some seconds, he applied it to his nostrils and was soon lying on the sofa, apparently as somniferous as the others, with the loaded blunderbuss in the hollow of his arm.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. WALT PUNKLEY'S GAME.

PUNKLEY had acted quickly and energetically in pursuance of his idea of getting Will Waffles into his clutches and "playing him off," as he elegantly termed it against Oscar Mifflin, whatever the latter gentleman might have meant to do with our young Arab.

His first move after separating with Mifflin and Hadley on the night of the Waffles adventure on the roof, was to proceed to Bellevue to enquire for the man who had sent the missive to the boy.

But he was as unsuccessful in his search as Will Waffles and John Chunk had afterwards been.

Unwilling to be foiled he frequented the warden's office making vain enquiries until the officials one and all voted him a nuisance. Little did he think that, in one of these visits he had brushed against the object of his search coming out as he entered.

Falling in this direction he betook himself to the environs of the City Hall and was earnest in his enquiries, endeavoring to learn the whereabouts of Will Waffles from the news-boys and boot-blacks that there "most do congregate."

He was equally unsuccessful here. Most of the youngsters that he asked indulged in oddly-worded expressions of wonder at the non-appearance for so long a time of Will Waffles on his usual beat, for Will seemed to be universally known and admired.

Others, who probably belong to the Waffles Sociables, and knew of their president's whereabouts, answered the enquirer with slangy evasiveness and eyed him with suspicion, for Walt Punkley was known to the boys, and known for a "bad egg;" and every little knot of juveniles he left whispered mysteriously of burglarious doings and "stretches at Sing-Sing."

So Mr. Punkley was compelled to give up the search for the time and content himself with the meagre information conveyed in such contradictory reports as:—

"Will Waffles! Yes, I know him! He's gone a fishin' with Horace Greeley."

"Will Waffles? He's gone to Hoboken to climb a tree."

Muttering savagely at his disappointment, the man turned away and hurried down Frankfort Street.

It was just after sunset, but still a fiery dim glimmer lingered in the sky, and lighted up the western windows and the clouds of steam that whirled in snowy antics over this great, industrial portion of the city.

The wind was blowing cold from the westward, and the wet snow on the side-walk was beginning to freeze and crackled beneath the feet of the man as he went.

On, past the clatter of steam presses,—the rumble of lathes, and the jingle and jabber of lager beer saloons, he hurried with bent head still muttering,

"Curse the luck?" he said, "Where can this sewer rat have hidden himself. I must find him, to make a martingale of him for this skittish horse, Sir Oscar, fire and furies, it makes my blood boil to see his airs, and imagine he even thinks he has outwitted me. And he does think it, blast him! I can see it in his manner—in his very glance, when he thinks I do not notice him. We'll see, we'll see!"

The man gave a savage. wolfish laugh. The laugh was echoed in a, burlesque manner behind him, and he turned sharply to look back.

A smaller ridiculous figure in a man's coat, presenting an outline resemblance to a patent pressed Esquimo dwarf was toddling in his rear.

It's head was sightlessiy buried in a helmet formed by a non-descript cap, a large comforter and the upturned collar of the coat. Its hands were trust into the opposite cuffs, in the manner of a muff, while the legs were rendered invisible by the skirts of the coat, which descended to within an inch of the flags.

Walt Punkley glanced contemptuously at the diminutive grotesque, and continuad his journey and his soliloquy.

"Mifflin does not think," mused he, "that I have taken a shy through his smooth face, and seen his game. He's got his pluck up—got confidence in himself, since I laughed him out of his cowardly notions, and and showed him the way he could get over the old fellow's whims and lay his hand upon the money. He's got me to supply him with a tool, now he begins to feel his wings and try to fly it alone. He'll get the will hisself now—will he? He was afraid to go within sight of the house before. I was to have done the job. He's afraid to trust me, the treacherous cur. He dosen't want to give me an everlasting chance of getting a string on him. He knows that my reputation ain't

the best in Headquarters or the courts, and he thinks he can put me off with a little whack, or defy and outface me, 'cause my word won't be believed 'gainst that of a man of wealth and education. Humph! These edicated fellers think that they're all high-cockolorum, and that nobody knows anything but themselves."

A long, low satrical chuckle escaped him which was faithfully re-chuckled by the dog-trotting pigmy behind, but he did not notice the sound.

"Mifflin's white-livered face," he continued, "turned as yellow as a carrott when he saw that I did not know anything about the letter that the boy gave him in mistake. He'd had given his best beaver not to have shown it. But I've got it. I twigged him," I saw that, from that moment, he intended to act double with me. D——n!" he cried, suddenly pausing with clenched teeth. "If he should have double banked me already—if he should have this missing boy in his clutches! I might have thought of that—I might have known it. But I'll euchre him yet. I'll carry out the old plan on my own hook. I'il get the papers—help myself to the swag and the n play out the game single-handed."

With this conclusion he dashed off at a more rapid pace, and into Pearl street, across Franklin Square, and, by the way of Cherry and Roosevelt, into the reeking atmosphere of Water street, where the many low groggery lights blinked through the darkness—for now the night had fallen inkily over the city—and the wild bacchaulian uproar had begun to issue, early as it was from the many dance houses and cellars.

Loud voices of men in dispute over cards or the payment of scores bantering speeches of women at the doors of passers-by—loud descriptions of some "mill" or dog fight, fearfully interspersed with oaths. the squeaking of tuneless fiddles, mirthless laughter of squads of poison-guzzlers made night hideous.

On, for some distance, went Walt Punkley in deep revolvement of his plans, and still on after him, at a short distance, tripped the odd looking little figure.

It was evident now that this similarity of their routes was not accidental, for, as they came to an unusually brightly-lighted portion of the street the little one would drop back a few steps or stand still, until Punkley had passed it and then follow on again.

At length the man turned into one of the largest of the temples of discord and blue-ruin. The bar was crowded and suffocating with the fumes of bad liquor and smoke of villainous weeds dignified by the name of tobacco. A party of dirty, ill-looking men were seated at a ricketty table in one corner playing "penny *ante*" with a very greasy pack of cards and a very small amount of pennies, while a couple more

'sets" were thumping their way through noisy games of "forty-fives" and "seven-up" on the heads of empty liquor barrels at the sides, every triumphal boarding of a trump causing the empty vessels to "boom" like minute guns at sea.

Walt Punkley pushed his way to the bar, and the little fellow dodged like a dog between the legs of the customers after him. Punkley called for a drink, paid for it, whispered to the bar-tender, received a negative shake of the head, followed by a motion toward the back door of the room, through which came a wild, pig-under-gate skirl of discordancy supposed to be music by the denizens of these halls of dazzling light. Then this demoniac noise switched off into a lively, raspy reel, and the thunder of many pairs of shoes coming to the balance, shook the house.

Punkley pushed forward through the crowd that blocked up the door of the dance-room, gazing at the dancers. A strange scene it was in the tobacco-smoke clouded apartment beyond. Several sets of terpsichoreans were "weltin' the floor" as the elegant author of "Finnigan's Wake" has it, encouraging each other with loud cries and whoops, slapping each other on the back and cracking their fingers above their heads, in all the wild enthusiasm of howling dervises.

Flashily dressed waiter girls, with, low-necked dresses and tremendously painted cheeks, flitted about the sides of the room with tin trays, bearing glasses of liquor and cabbage leaf cigars to supply the wants of the customers, who occupied the forms along the walls.

These customers were sailors, boatmen, longshoremen, etc., with a goodly sprinkling of those unplace-able yonng gentlemen, who delight in big peaked black caps and red shirts, together with monkey jackets and rolled-up pants.

I will not trouble the reader with a more minute discription of the room than to mention that there was the regulation amount of gaudy-colored lithographs of fighting dogs, game cocks, race horses and pugilists, with here and there a pictorial remembrance of the ready money principles upon which the establishment was conducted, in a suggestive rebus quietly requesting the imbibative patrons "to fork over what they owed," or a representation of the handless dial of a clock, bearing the legend, "no tick here," or the melancholy spectacle of a ginger-colored poodle who has departed this life and is lying on his back with his legs in the air, like an overturned wash-stool, with an epitaph, written by some of the poetic masters, commencing

"POOR TRUST IS DEAD——"

and concluding with a concise account of the immediate cause of that distresing affair.

Perched on a spindle-shanked table in one corner sat the chief demons of discord in the persons of a colored fiddler and a discordant clarionet-player, who sawed and blew with frightful earnestness, in order to make

their notes, (Heaven save the mark,) heard above the jabbering, laughing, scolding, swearing, thumping tumult of sounds that made the scene appear like a jollification over the completion of the tower of Babel, with old Nick providing the music.

Punkley rushed along as rapidly as he could through the throng, now eyeing the people on the settees, now scrutinizing the whirling figures in the centre. At length he stopped suddenly opposite one of the dancing parties and stood gazing at them.

The person who seemed to rivet his attention was a stout, full-faced man with a rather comical expression of countenance, but, if stout in body, his size did not seem to interfere in the least with his enjoyment in the light-fantastic toe line. He was the spirit of the dance—the observered of all observers;—and he seemed to have a full appreciation of the fact, for the way in which he revelled in the display of his wealth of fancy steps and turned and wheeled about was a caution to Jim Crow.

At every brilliant flourish and dust-rising ending, the admiring spectators gave expression to their approval by crying :—

"Go it, Tim! Pile in, Tim! Rise it, Soolivan!"

And the inspirited Tim would start away, more spiritedly then ever.

In one of the turns in which he came close to Walt Punkley, tha gentleman put out his hand and struck him a light blow on the guard of the arm. The dancer turned quickly toward him with a slight exclamation of enquiry.

"Come, Tim, I want you," said Punkley in a low, short way.

"Bad manners to ye, Walt, couldn't ye wate till we bate the fiddler?" asked the enthusiastic Tim.

"No, no time. Come!" said Punkley, starting off.

"Blur-an-nounters!" cried Tim woefully. "Isn't this too bad, that pleasure must be attended to before bizness. You must excuse me, Polly Ann. I'll get some one to finish the fiddler. Here, boys, which of ye'll take a hand in and shake a foot?"

Several volunteers sprang forward, but Tim's partner, a great buxom, florid-faced creature pushed them aside.

"Here's my partner, and no thanks to you, Mister Tim," she cried seizing the little, muffled figure that had followed Punkley, unnoticed into the room, and lifting it from its feet, she whirled away into the dance, the little legs and long coat-tails of the boy describing a circle of confusion as he went.

CHAPTER XVII.

PATSY THE NEWS—A DANCE HOUSE—PLOTTING AND SPYING.

Loud shouts of laughter arose from the crowd and growling imprecations from the disturbed dancers at her odd action, and the wild struggle of the victim to get his feet to the floor.

"Let me down, you, let me down!" cried the boy, and the woman at length breathlessly complied with his request.

"Well, there, you imp you, dance if you won't swing!" she puffed as she soused him on the floor.

"But the commotion had attracted the attention of the feminine presiding genius of the place—a great burly, bloated woman, who elbowed her way through the crowd and caught the intruder by the muffled neck to drag him from the scene.

"No you don't," cried the youngster, suddenly wrenching himself free from her grasp, at the sacrifice, however, of his red muffler, which the hostess still held,

"Come you, git out o' this; you young rascal you, what does the like of you want here?" she cried, angrily.

The boy avoided her grasp, and sticking his thumbs into the lappels of his coat, eyed her with the coolest effrontery as he said:

"Well you've got a gall, Missus Burns, to let on you don't know me. Ye'll know me in the mornin' when yer looking out for yer paper."

His small size contrasted with his old fashioned manner, caused great merriment.

"What?" cried Mrs. Burns, "Then you're—"

"I'm Patsy the News and no mistake—so what d'ye want to go a puttin' me out for? I ain't no dead beat."

"Bravo, Patsy!" cried the bystanders, "Keep yer partner, go on with the dance.

"You bet!" cried the youngster, "Clear the track, Mrs. Burns, Hey, Snowball, rasp the rosin,—dust it lively, Go it, Polly Ann, my name's screecher!"

"Go it, Screecher!" cried the crowd and they went it.

The diminutive Patsy seemed perfectly at home, and, catching the long skirts of his coat in dainty burlesque of the manner of the females, he wheeled and crossed and swaggered and balanced with most mirth

provoking gravity, introducing, in utter disregard of time or fitness of clog-steps, break-downs, double and single shuffles, trebles, and all the immense variety of pedal fantastics in which he had become expert while warming his little feet on the frozen pavements at the corners.

Every cry of encouragement or remark of praise seemed to add to the spirit of the young imp, and he "went it" faster and faster until at last the poor clarionet player's eyes threatened to start from their spheres and roll down his sweaty cheeks, and the elbow of the sable genius who manipulated the fiddle, became perfectly demoralized, and wabbled about in the loose-jointed manner of a thrasher's flail.

At length exhaustion overpowered the heroic pair, and, by mutual consent the music died away with a strangling squeak, and the Ethiopean harmonist addressed the assemblage, thusly:

"Dar, ladies an' gemmans—dats 'nuff for one hitch—inta-mission for 'freshments—promenade to de bar an' don't forgit de fiddler."

Under cover of the laughter at the grimaces accompanying this, the young detective broke away and hurried up the room in the direction in which Punkley and Tim had gone.

He looked sharply around the crowd of coarse brown faces, but could see nothing of the men he sought, and he passed on unnoticed, for every one was filled with their own maudlin excitement.

A small, low-browed door showed blackly at one corner of the upper back end of the room. As soon as he approached it, seeing no one paying particular attention to him, he dodged into it with the agility of a cat.

It opened into a narrow, dark passage, that, judging from the close fœtid atmosphere, the boy concluded led to the vaults of the building, for I forgot to mention that this home of wretchedness and revelry was a basement.

Patsy paused to listen with his hand against the cold, slimy wall.

The trinkle of running water sounded from the darkness before him, and, distinct from this, his quick ear detected the irregular hissing of whispering voices.

He crept forward, slowly and cautiously, guided by the damp touch of the walls, and at length was brought again to a stand-still by seeing a few feet before him a feeble line of light reaching from top to bottom of a door.

Here the sounds reached him more plainly and he could distinguish even in a suppressed under-tone the rough, glutteral snaps of Walt Punkley from the weak but more musical cadences of Tim's voice.

"None of your croaking, you cowardly owl, or I'll put the heel of my boot in your mouth!" he heard Punkley say, "Curse you, do you think of nobody but yourself. Have you no thought of how hot this cursed city is getting for me? I'll delay no longer, I must make a stake and leave,

and let me tell you, Tim, the sooner you transpose your beautiful carcass the better for that beautiful neck that you seem to make such a pet of. Dancing—no less! humph! you'll be dancing a single jig to the tune of '*Twisting of the Rope.*"

"Hush—hush!" said the other in a frightened tone, "You don't know what a devil of a place this is for spyin', and listenin' and talkin'. What is it you mane to do?"

The boy by one quick movement was at the door with his eye and ear to the chink.

It was a dreary, cell-like place into which he looked; as far as he could see it was filled with a litter of empty barrels and boxes, and lighted by a kerosene lamp suspended in an iron ring.

Walt Punkley was half-seated, with one leg thrown over the head of a barrell, and Tim the dancer stood in a nervous position before him.

Patsy thought he had never seen so great a change in anyone in so short a space of time as was visible in Tim. The light of merriment had departed from his fun-speaking eyes and a restless look of fear had taken its place. His ruddy face had changed to a sallow hue, and his formerly plump chaps hung loose and flabby.

"What is it ye mane to do?" he repeated.

"The crowbars," snapped Punkley, quickly, but in a low tone, "The crows and picks, you understand? Get them quick."

"It's early yet," said Tim, nervously.

"We'd best not lave in a hurry. There was English Jack only night afore last——"

"Pooh!" cried Punkley, "You're a fool—you're afraid of your own eyebrows. Get the tools and come. We won't strike the place till twelve or one, but we may as well be near. Besides we'll have to hunt up Red Dan. 'Twas him that laid the job, he knows the place to a knock down."

"Red Dan!" cried the other, "It'll be a quare one o'clock that you'll see him with you."

"Why?"

', Didn't you hear of the row at Pock-marked Ned's?"

"Something about."

"Well, wasn't Red Dan knifed there and sent to Bellevue, and didn't they think he was goin' to kick it, and didn't he think so hisself, and begin to confess like a steam engine and tell all he knew, and didn't me and Ned go to see him and when we heard the way he was goin' on, we put up Ned's wife to go cryin' to the hospital and claim him for her husband."

"Did she do it?"

"Be my faith she did, up to the handle. Played her part like a play-actor."

"And where is he now?"

"In bed at Ned's."

"Is he very bad?"

"Divil a bad. He's more frightened than hurt. All a skear. But the fears just as bad az if he had been stuck through the heart."

"We must get him. I'll make him get over his fear by a greater fear," said Punkley with a confident chuckle.

"I must get a hold on this swag. That feller, Mifflin, is as deep as he's smooth, and he's too sweet to be wholesome. He'll p'raps take it into his noddle to accuse me of the old man's peggin' out as well as that poor devil Hadley."

The last words were said half musingly, and he was silent for an instant as if in deep thought, but, with a quick start he turned and said rapidly:

"I've never been beaten yet, Tim—and by——I'm not going to let him get the first horse on me! Get the fixings' quick."

Tim commenced a nervous demur, but an impatient curse from the other silenced him, and, going to one corner of the room, if it might be called a room, he removed some of the broken boxes and uncovered a barrell.

"If you must, you must, I suppose," he said, "so choose your choose. "There you are—tools enough to make a railroad."

Punkley picked out two small crowbars or jimmies, a couple of chisels of different shapes, and a muffled mallet, while Tim produced from one of the boxes a pair of dark lanterns and a bunch of skeleton keys.

"Now we're ready," he said, with a sort of forced laugh, pocketing the chisels, hiding one of the jimmies inside his coat and handing the mallet and the other crow to Tim, he continued: "Here, you stow these away, the mallet won't add much to your bulk. What's the matter with yer figure head? You look as if you had fallen foul of your grand mother's spook."

"I don't like this job. It's bad enough to crack a crib, without bein' mixed up in worse things," said Tim in a forboding voice.

"Why, yon infernal idiot!" cried Punkley in a louder and angrier tone than he had yet used, "havn't I told you this in a safe and saving game? We don't go to break into the real house, we go into the empty one next door, we go up until beneath the very rafters, break through above the ceiling-joists where not even the M. P's will ever think of looking for an entrance. That done, we have nothing to do but descend the stairs—nab the documents and swag and make our escape by the same way as we entered."

"But the other affair—the poi——"

"Will, likely, all be over when we get there. Then let him and our

dupe, Hadley, fight it out, for it will be 'atween them, and whichever loses will be blamed for our work when the things is missed."

"But what can he say this Hadley feller did it for?"

"Revenge! Some all-fired grudge he has at old Coincraft. I found that out and laid all this game on it. Let them fight it out on that line, it's nothing to us which wins or loses. There'll be a crush somewhere, and I, for one, want to get from under. Give's one of the darkies and let's get."

As the boy heard them move toward the door, he retired precipitately along the passage, and out once more into the crowded dance-room where the dancers were at it more fastly and furiously than ever.

Burying himself from observation among the crowd, he kept his eye on the door through which he expected to see the two plotting worthies appear, but they did not come.

"After some time he ventured to re-enter and cautiously made his way to the chink of light. All was silent within and, pushing open the ricketty door, he gazed in.

The place was empty.

"By cricky, they've given me the go-by!" exclaimed the long-skirted spy turning back. "But I know their next move. Then, ho for the Sociables!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE "WILL WAFFLES SOCIABLES."—JOHN CHUNK AS AN ORATOR.

PATSY the News pushed his tortuous way through the bachandian throughout into the cold night, and out on to the now hard frozen sidewalks.

Muffling himself up closely once more he hurried rapidly along in a westerly direction until he struck Chatham Street, and here he paused, listening intently.

So far as the well-known cries of the dessemmators of knowledge and news went, the streets were silent, for Patsy had at the time, no ear for any other sound.

There was, to be sure, now and then, a faint, appealing cry of the name of some evening paper, proceeding from the lips of some poor little novice who, in newsboy's parlance, had "got stuck," but of the regular brother professionals not a voice was heard.

"The fellers have all skedaddled, and I don't blame 'em, for, by Jimminy kings, disguise feels kinder comf'table if it don't look extra gallus," said Patsy, with some difficulty bending his bundled up neck to

survey his long-robed figure. "Guess they're at the Club-Room pitchin' into the lager and cig's. Wonder where the chunky feller with the pot metal hat is? He was was to meet me here."

At the word a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and the "fellar with the pot-metal hat" stood before him in the person of our old friend Mr. John Chunk, in box jacket and glazed tarpaulin.

"Hello! guv'ner. Here you is."

"Yes, my hearty. Been waiting long?"

"No, just arrove."

"What news?"

"Bang-up. Got the inside track and a through ticket. Train starts at twelve or one. Must be all aboard. Let's leg it. The fellar's 'll be waitin'. Nice a six-hand game as you'd wish to git into. Waffleses and you and me, 'gainst Walt Punkley and Dancin' Tim and some other bruiser wot's been wounded and is afeard. Won't it be gay?"

Mr. Chunk expressed his entire belief in the gaiety of the arrangement, and the two hurried away through the tortuous ways of the east side of the city until, in one of the least attractive of the streets, the youngster turned into a basement lager beer saloon and the man followed.

Patsey enquired if any of the Waffleses had been there, and was answered in the affirmative by the Falstaffian landlord, who jerked his leg of mutton thumb over his shoulder toward an inner room, and thither the boy led John Chunk.

The "Waffles Sociables" were a picturesque, if not a very stylish gathering.

Imagine a small, square, low-ceiled room with a low-hanging gaslight in the centre, two round tables with shelves for beer mugs beneath the leaves, a stained wooden settee at either side, and some eight or ten massive, yellow-painted arm-chairs, and a fireless hearth, with a keg of lager set upon the empty grate, and you have the inanimate portion of the scene before you.

About a dozen young gentlemen; of different sizes, ages and styles of beauty were scattered about the room in every possible position supposed to be conducive of corporeal comfort; heels up and legs over the chair arms, appeared to be the styles most in favor.

On every side indivuality of character and independance of thought were visible, for the Waffleses were entrammelled by the straight-waist coats of imitative society; they were not bound in by the petty fetters of convertionality—they spurned popular taste and trampled on fashion.

They had a deep veneration for the antique, and looked with a noble scorn on the newly invented kickshaws of dress.

As with the ancients, their garments mostly came by descent and were thankfully and unquestionably received.

The Waffleses were the true philosophers, that looked through the shadows of things in search of the substance—and found it.

To them a hat was a hat, a coat was a coat—both valuable according to their warmth and ease—elbow room and head room not objected to.

This indulgement of individual taste was apparent in the great variety of dress that distinguished the Sociables.

Show me, ye promenaders on the "grand street"—the dollar side,—such a pleasing diver ity of style, such exquisite ease of carriage.

Most of the Waffleses were smoking cigars, and all had lager beer glasses before them, which one comical boy had formed himself into a committee to replenish from the beer barrel on the hob.

When Will Waffles described to Mr. John Chunk the association that bore his name, Mr. Chunk had naturally pictured to himself a regularly appointed society hall, with imposing desks and all the other paraphernalia to such scenes belonging, occupied by a careful selection from the progressive rising generation with soaped hair and clean bibs and tuckers sitting in profound silence to listen to heavy worded wisdom holding forth against the use of beer and tobacco.

His astonishment on being ushered into the presence of the Waffles Sociables may therefore be imagined.

The members, discussing the produce of the lager cask and the last run to a fire, or some such popular topic, did not notice the entrance of John Chunk and his guide. Indeed, the room was so filled with tobacco smoke that it would have been hard for them to have done so.

"Why, it can't be possible that *this* is your society room, my boy," said Mr. Chunk, causing the boy to pause by a touch on the shoulder.

"'Tain't nothin' else," said the boy, in a voice in which a slight tone of pride could be detected.

"And are these the Waffles' Sociables?" asked Mr. John Cuunk in surprise.

"Them's the feller!" said Patsy the News with an elevation of tone.

"And what's that little demon doing at the fireplace?"

"Him? He's dealin' out the lush."

"Beer!" said Chunk in astonishment.

"Yes," said Patsy, proundly, evidently mistaking the cause of the surprised tone in which the good man spoke. "That's our style, sir. We does it by the wholesale. Buys it by the barrel at the time. Every one puts in so much, and if any of the fellers is broke the chaps that's got stamps puts up for him until he gits flush agin."

"And then he pays, does he?" asked Chunk.

"Dead sure, or out he goes. No bilks allowed in this chebang."

"And do you find this an agreeable way of spending your——"

"Evenings" John Chunk was going to say, but his voluble guide interrupted him.

"Oh, yes. It comes far cheaper, and it's more decent and less trouble, and saves quarrels over the rounds and who's to pay for them, and all that," explained Patsy. "We only pays three dollars a keg, and pony up for the broken glasses. You can get it cheaper than that, but we get the best, and have the use of the hall to boot."

Mr. John Chunk was surveying the "hall" once more, as well as he could for the floating clouds of smoke, when he heard a shrill crow near him:—

"Hi-i-yi! fellers! Here's Patsy the Noose, with a full-grown ca-root as big as life."

"Feller Waffleses!" exclaimed Patsy the News, waving the red comforter which he had removed from his neck. "I beg to say to the Vice-president and this associa——is the Vice-president in the chair?"

"Yes, yes. Heave ahead! Sling out yer slack!"

"Order, darn yer eyes!" cried a voice from some invisible personage who was thumping the further table with a beer mug.

Mr. John Chunk strained his eyes in the direction, and, through the "smooth clouds rolling dun," caught a faint glimpse of a youngster perched upon the back of a chair with his feet in the seat.

"Order!" repeated this young official with a thump on the table that went near to demolishing the mug.

"Mister Vice," proceeded Patsy the News, in true parliamentary style, "though the gentleman as I have the honor of accompanying me is not reg'larly and straightforwardly speaking, a recruit, as Jack Timpson says, I take great pleasure, to be sure, in interdoocing the gentleman to this Association—as has been spoke of before to this Association by the honorable president of this Association as that bright, partic'lar star,—the buzzum friend of his heart,—Mr. John Chunk."

At every successive phrase of this short but glowing oration, the bewilderment and confusion of good John Chunk increased, and when the diminative initiator took him by the hand to lead him forward into the mist, through which the Sociables, with glowing cigars, showed faintly like grotesque demons, his bewilderment changed into a panic and he would have fled, but that several of the members had surrounded him, and he had lost all idea of the direction in which the door lay.

"Hi—yi! A Junk! A Junk!" rang from the smoke on all sides.

"Order!" exclaimed the semi-invisible Mr. Vice from his perch, demolishing his fragile gavel with one tremendous blow on the table.

"Open the windows!" he cried theatrically. "Let out the smoke that we may see our guest! Fetch me a new mug, and dish the lager!"

The window was opened and the cold air rushed in and the smoke struggled out.

The young representative of Gambrinus in command of the beer barrel bestirred himself, aided by several self-supplying volunteers, in replenishing the glasses.

"Order!" exclaimed Mr. Vice, as soon as the air was clear enough to see across the table. "Order!" he cried standing erect in his chair, and using his heel for a gavel, this time. "Now I seize with pleasure," he said, with a flourish of his glass of beer, "with pleasure, sir, this favorable opportunity of welcoming to our social board,—I beg pardon, brother Waffleses—our Sociables' board—a gentleman so distinguished in—in—whatever business he is engaged at—as Mister—as Mister—a—"

"Junk! Junk!" prompted a dozen voices.

"As Mister Junk. Anything to the sailor feller in the play, sir? Jack Junk, I mean *Floating Beacon*, you know; you've seen it at the Bowery. No. Hardly thought you was. Merely asked for information. Well, brother Waffleses, to you I speak. Let every Waffles, with a new cigar in his teeth, and a fresh glass of lager in his left, extend the right hand of fellership to our new friend and brother, John Junk!"

"Hooray! hooray!" cried two or three.

"Si-lence! till I give the word!" thundered Mr. Vice, stamping on the table. "Now, all ready—lungs full—chests thrown out and mouths wide open. Now, three cheers and a tiger, for the bright partic'lar star, Will Waffles's friend—John Chunk! Hip, hip, hooray! hooray! Tiger!"

And that tiger was a terrific arrangement, making the recipient of the honor, who had before this faced the waves of the ocean and the storms of the heavens fearlessly, tremble in his shoes.

"Take a wet!" cried the Bacchus of evening, pushing a mug of the foaming beverage under the newly initiated member's nose.

"Yes, pitch into it, and don't be afraid," cried Patsy the News, "for they'll have no mercy on your fee by and by when it comes."

"What—what?" cried the Vice, who had descended from his dignified perch and approached the bewildered John Chunk. "Have you no more taste then to speak of fees before the new member has hung up his hat? You're welcome John Chunk. Hang yer pot metal on this peg and make yerself at home. *Sociables* is our name and Sociables is our nature, ain't it Patsy."

"You bet," said Patsy.

"Take a seat, John Chunk."

It was certainly a laughable sight to see the fat, manly face of John Chunk as he turned in bewilderment from one to other of the bold youthful, bright-eyed faces that surrounded him.

For, notwithstanding the license of indulgence that these young Arabs, took to themselves, their out-door life and exposure in all weathers, had given them strong constitutions and great powers of endurance.

"I have not time to sit, my boys," said John Chunk, endeavoring by the use of the last two words to appease his manly conscience for fraternizing with these pigmy sociables. "I came here on business that has been before explained to you; I am ready and willing to assist you in carrying that business through to the best of my power and ability."

"Hear him! Hear! Hear! Hear him!" yelled the Sociables, in wild chorus.

John Chunk looked about him in feverish nervousness, and fanned himself with his tarpaulin.

"Go on, go on! Let's hear from you!" cried the Waffleses. "Rip it out old top."

Thus encouraged, Mr. Chunk moistened his lips with his tongue, and with a bow like a Chinese mandarin, addressed the re-perched Mr. Vice in this remarkable and original phrase:—

"Mr. Chairman—unaccustomed as I am to public speaking——"

"Oh blow the public speaking! Sling us a speech!" cried a Wafflesonian with his heels on the mantel-piece.

"We don't want nothin' public; give's yer private opinion o' things in general," exclaimed another who seemed to be endeavoring to stand on his head to let his heels see themselves in the looking-glass.

"Order!" roared the Vice. "Heave ahead, John Junk!"

"Go in!" exclaimed Patsy the News, slapping the bewildered novitiate

ate on the back. "They ain't used to hifalutin—give it to them barefooted!"

"I was about to remark that before I was horrified by seeing this rough scene, I——"

"Oh—o—o—oh—o!" groaned the Sociables denouncingly.

"Unparliamentary!" cried the gentleman at the mantle-piece.

"Let the gentleman keep on his gloves," exclaimed another.

"Draw it mild, mister," recommended the gymnast.

"Order you yelpers!" bellowed Mr. Vice. "Go on, brother Junk; dish it up in your own shape."

"That," said Chunk, speaking very rapidly and very hotly, "that before I came here——"

"That's better."

"Order!"

"I had formed a friendship,—I might say affection——"

"Well, darn it, say it then."

"For the youthful and eccentric William Waffles, president of this—this association," said John Chunk with a gulp.

"Hear! Hear! Three times three, and a ring-tailed roarer for Will Waffles!" cried the gymnast, enthusiastically, and they gave them, ring-tail and all.

But the ringing tale that the roaring told in the bar-room, brought the fat, frousy landlord to expostulate.

"Mit the young gen-lmense. If dye'd mak' shoost a leetle less noyse, or fear de neyborse might sent in the bolicemans, etc."

But the peace-loving law abider was forced to beat an inglorious retreat before a fragrant shower of fireworks in the shape of cigar-butts; and the vice-president proposed, that the business of the meeting should proceed, and the business of the meeting may be epitomized thus:

Mr. Chunk reminded the assembled Sociability that Will Waffles that night stood in need of the co-operation of the gentlemen present in his own peculiar style; poetically stating that the honored president of the Waffleses, whom he had the honor to represent, expected every Waffles that night to do his duty, and the Waffleses pledged themselves in flowing mugs not to disappoint the expectations of the honorable president.

Then Mr. Chunk further informed them that the interests of the honorable president called him from them in another direction, but that, when he had found the man for whom he sought, (a most important thing for the interests aforesaid,) he should rejoin them at the grand rendezvous agreed upon.

Then, after long and fierce opposition it was carried that Mr. Chunk's initiatory keg of lager should be laid over until they should "meet in happier times, where the woodbine twineth," had Will Waffles should be there to do the honors.

They then gave three cheers for the new member.

The meeting broke up, and John Chunk went on his way with a strangely mixed-up opinion of the "Waffles Sociables."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR—BIRDS OF PREY.

FATHER TIME in his flight was rapidly approaching "that hour of night's black arch the keystone," when Walt Punkley and his pal, Tim the dancer, having listened to the faint growing echoes of a policeman's tread, flitted across the avenue and dived into the dark area of an empty house adjoining that in which Jonas Coincraft resided.

Between them they dragged a half-resisting man, who tottered as he went.

"Don't let your hand off him, Tim," whispered Punkley, as they stood beneath the high stoop before the basement door, "Hold him till I get in."

A very few seconds did it take the expert burglar to spring the lock and throw open the door, and the three entered the dark, empty-sounding passage. Punkley closing the door behind them.

"Come, let us get to a back room and light the glims. It's risky here, the cops may spot us"

Catching the man who seemed an unwilling participant in the affair by the arm, he felt his way along the hall and into an inner store-room. Here he struck a match, and as the ghastly light of its sulphury blaze fell upon the frightened face of the man held by Tim. The burglar gave a savage growl of contempt.

The man was, indeed, a wretched looking creature—most apparently unfit for any undertaking requiring nerve and self-possession.

The figure was bent, as if from weakness and cringing fear combined. The face was overspread by a sallow paleness; and the frightened, restless eyes glittered feverishly. One hand was bandaged in dirty cloths, and the fingers of the other opened and shut nervously.

"Look you here, Red Dan!" said Walt Punkley through his teeth in a grating undertone, after he had lit the two dark lanterns. "You see this seven-shooter? Now, none of your white-livered pranks, you know, don't you try to play hyena on me, or by—— you'll get the full benefit of them chambers."

"I ain't goin' to play on you," said Red Dan, in a shaky way, "but I wish you could a' done the job without me."

"What is there above?" asked Punkley, not heeding his wish.

"Nothing. Empty as a barn."

"Then above be it. I want to be here as short a time as possible, and as short a time in there. Tim, you keep one of the darkies and have the escape clear if we should had to scoot it. Here, Dan, here's the skeletons, take the lantern and lead the way. D——n it man!" he cried fiercely as Red Dan's trembling hand touched his, "what are you in such a cursed shiver about? Can't you brace up for to-night, and you'll have enough to retire on for the remainder of your miserable life?"

With an inarticulate murmur the man took the light and led the way up a dark flight of stairs. A door at the top stayed their progress. The

delay was but of a second's duration, however, for, while Red Dan was fumbling at it with a bunch of keys, his impatient companion put his foot against it and burst it open. The noise reverberated through the empty house and they paused and shaded the light for a while before they proceeded through the hall, and up another creaking pair of stairs.

"How many flights are there?" whisperered Punkley.

"Three, I think," answered the other in the same tone, "that is besides the cock-loft ladder. The houses are just the same, but its a long time since I was in either. There should be twenty steps in this stair I'll count them to make sure."

He descended and re-ascended, carefully counting—his companion with the revolver and tools standing at the head.

"All right!" said Red Dan, "I remember the number well, for it was well impressed upon my mind."

"Never mind your remembrances," said Punkley impatiently, "Lead me to this cock-loft, as you call it, and be quick about it."

Red Dan led the way in silence to the next story, and going up a nearly perpendicular ladder, he pushed up a hatch in the ceiling of the landing, and, after turning the light full on to scrutenize the place above, he dragged himself up through the scuttle.

"Punkley handed him the tools and then followed.

It was a dusty, unused little loft, formed by the pitch of the roof, which slanted to the floor at either side, leaving head room only in the centre.

There were a couple of flat roof sashes on the outside. On these the frozen snow formed a crystaline curtain off which the lamp rays sparkled.

"Now," said Punkley.

"There. Cut there," said Dan, pointing to the centre of the wall between them and Coincraft's house.

Punkley seized the mallet and a chisel, and stooped, about to strike the wall, when Dan nervously stopped him.

"I'm afraid of my life you'll be heard," he said with a shiver, "Don't you think you'd better try it in the old way by one of the doors or windows?"

"No, you fool, I want to hide my tracks that he may get all the blame. The doors and windows are more carefully barred than those of a jail. The mallet's muffled, how should they hear us?"

"Well, I suppose I may go below, now?" said Red Dan.

"You may, may you," cried the other turning savagely upon him. "You have one of your shivering fits on and want to desert me. Let me see you move a foot and I'll dash your miserable brains out with the mallet!"

The man cowered before him, but said nothing, and the burglar commenced to work. Under the strokes of the chisel the plaster fell off in large flakes, and soon a circular patch of bricks, a yard in diameter was laid bare. Then, selecting a long, thin chisel, he proceeded slowly and patiently, with the skill of a practised hand, to dig out the mortar around one of the upper bricks.

At last it was loosened and fell to the floor with a noise that made the men start and listen until the echoes had died away.

"Mustn't let that happen again," said Punkley pulling off his coat and spreading it on the floor. "As the wall gets thinner they'll be able to hear in the next crib. Here, take the bricks from me and pile them out of the way. We must have a clear track for fear of accidents.

The work now progressed rapidly. Red Dan kneeling and assisting, as brick after brick was sprung out of its place and handed to him. Larger and deeper grew the aperture, and at last Punkley paused and tapping the back of it with the handel of his chisel, said:

"Last thickness, now comes the tug."

Red Dan cast the dise of light strongly upon the spot where Punkley directed, and the burglar proceeded, as carefully and noiselessly as a sculptor, to loosen a brick in the only remaining barrier.

The silence was unbroken, except by the light, muffled tops of the mallet and the heavy breathing of the men rendered more audible by the attempt at suppression.

Even Punkley, with all his nerve, found his heart beat quicker and his hand tremble.

"Ready!" he whispered, "Darken the light!"

With clattering teeth and trembling hands Red Dan turned the shade on the lantern, and they were in total darkness.

Carefully—carefully Punkley removed the brick and felt the rush of cold air from one house to the other, through the aperture, but all was blackness beyond.

He put his ear to the opening and listened; there was no sound, but suddenly he heard a noise coming from the darkness of the hatch-way behind him, and seized a crowbar from the floor.

Red Dan had heard it too, and clutched his companion by the arm with shaking hand.

"Turn up the light, quick!" cried Punkley, savagely, under his breath.

But his comrade either could not or would not obey him, and, with a curse, the burglar grappled in the darkness, seized the lantern and turned on the light.

There was nothing visible.

He rushed to the scuttle, and bent to listen. All was silent below. He gave a low tremulous whistle, which after a moment's silence was answered from the darkness, away down the stairs. At the same time a rush of mice across the ceiling beneath his knees broke the stillness, and he turned back to his work with a contemptous:—

"Pooh! Nothing but mice!"

The rest of the bricks were rapidly removed in darkness and silence.

"All right!" he whispered, "Give me the glim, take a crow and follow me"

Taking the lantren from the shaking hand of his companion, he carefully turned back the slide and let the light stream through the hole, into the space beyond.

It was a loft like the one in which they were—and empty.

"Come!" he said, and stealthily as two wolves, the housebreakers crept through, and stood erect on the other side.

And almost at the same moment Patsy the News and Mr. Vice stood upon the floor they had left, and the goodly visage of John Chunk, appeared in the trap hole like a rising moon.

CHAPTER XX.

GAMES AND COUNTER GAMES—GRAND FINALE.

Mrs. Kate Coddle and Mrs Meg Merry Lees still sat at this late hour in the comfortable kitchen of the Coincraft mansion. Rebecca, worn out with waiting on them, had retired, and left them hob-nobbing over their tea-cups.

History has not recorded, and heaven only knows, how often that friendship-furnishing, peace-promoting tea-pot had been replinished on that important night.

Tis said the earth-grasp of the oak is strengthened by the storm, whose wrath casts weaker trees prostrate, so, comparing great things to little, was it with the friendship of those two worthy ladies.

Never had their minds been so fully opened, never had their big hearts gone so generously fourth to each other, as since the ever memorable battle of the bottles.

Strong tea is, in itself a great pacifier—a wonderful social agent—but Rebeccas's retirement had been the signal for Mrs. Coddles's producing from her pocket a flask, the contents of which she significantly hinted was excellent for making tea, "take a strong hold on the ninth water," and under the influence of the compound beverage, the goodly faces of the twain blossomed into smiles, and their nimble lips dropped rippling eloquence.

There was a sudden interruption caused by their hearing,or thinking they heard,a noise up stairs.

It was not repeated, but this gave Kate a hint that it was about time she paid a visit to the sick chamber to see how her patient and his watcher were getting on.

She returned in a few minutes to report that they were all quiet, that the doctor was there, too, and that Will Waffles was sleeping like an angel, Heaven preserve him! with a great ugly thing like a cannon in his arms.

This news started the maternal fears of Meg, and she insisted on accompanying her friend back to see to the safety of her protege.

So up they went. But they stopped in astonishment, midway on the stairs, to see the door of the sick room cautiously opened and the figure of a man visible by the low burning light.

"God be good to us!" breathed Mrs. Kate in her friend's ear, as she clutched her by the arm. "It's Mr. Oscar! How did he get in, or what does he want?"

The man had evidently not heard their footsteps on the soft stair-carpet, and was too intent upon the scene within the room, to notice the very feeble camphene light that guided them, and Kate immediately blew it out on seeing him.

After a short pause he entered, leaving the door ajar. His actions were stealthy and cat-like, and the womans curiosity of the watchers was fully aroused.

"There's something bad going on, Mrs. Lees," whispered Kate, "and I'm bound to see it out."

They crept up stealthily to the door, and Kate applied her eye to the keyhole.

The young man was standing with his back to the door, gazing from the corpse-like form of Hadley in the chair to the heavy breathing old man in bed.

"Curse the fellow!" he hissed through his clenched teeth, "he has done as he threatened; he has spared the old dotard and poisoned himself. But I am prepared for that. I will not be foiled."

He took something from his pocket and Kate had to desert the keyhole, and put her head wholly in the door to follow his next action.

"This," he said, pouring some drops from a vial into the drink that the nurse had placed ready to the sick man's hand, "this will settle it. What care I for traceless poisons? When this deed is discovered there sits the culprit, condemned by his own self-destruction,—the reasons palpable—revenge and fear of justice—murder and suicide."

Powers preserve us," gasped Kate Coddle over her shoulder. "It's murder he means. Keep yer eye on the thief of the world, Meg, and be as mute as a mouse, till I run down to the door and call the policeman off the beat."

The stout body hurried away and Meg took her post of observation.

Mifflin threw the vial, uncorked as it was, on the carpet at Hadley's feet.

"There!" he said, "when I get my hands on the cursed papers who can dispute my right but the girl, Rebecca? And she can only share it. Who will suspect the next of kin of having aught to do with this horror? Let me see—the precious documents lie here,—in the strong-box on the bureau."

He crossed, and taking out keys, laid his hand on an iron-bound, oblong box of dark wood. But the bureau stood near the sofa, and just as he was applying the key to the lock his attention was attracted by Will Waffles' heavy breathing, unheard before in the still louder sound made by the asthmatic patient.

He started forward and gazed down at the sleeping boy—then with an involuntary, audible curse, he drew a knife and raised it above him.

The sight of the glittering weapon was too much for Meg Merry Lees, and, with a loud scream, she sprang up and was about to rush to the protection of her darling, when a cloth was thrown over her head and she was pulled on her back on the hall floor.

She looked up and saw a savage looking man above her with his knee on her breast and a knife raised.

"Another such yelp as that," he growled, "and I'll slit your weazand from ear to ear!"

With surprising dexterity he slipped a loop of cord over her wrists, drew it painfully tight and left her helpless.

On hearing the cry of the woman Mifflin turned savagely and sprang toward the room door, knife in hand, but was confronted on the threshold by Walt Punkley and Red Dan,

One short pause of astonishment and he threw himself upon the burglar, exclaiming savagely.

"Curse you, what brings you here?"

In pure self-defence Punkley struck the knife from his hand and felled him to the floor with the crow.

Quick, Dan!" he cried. "The strong box on the bureau! Quick!"

Red Dan sprang toward it, but Will Waffles startled by the tumult staggered to his feet, gun in hand, dizzy and bewildered, levelled and fired at the dimly seen figures, exclaiming:—

"Bull's eye! Three shots for five cents! How's that for a shootist?"

With a deep groan Red Dan fell forward, clutching the arm of Hadley's chair, and remaining in a kneeling position, with his head dropped on the knee of the man, who, awakened from his torpor, gazed at the bent figure in wild astonishment.

Will Waffles barely waiting to see the effect of his shot, and unheeding the wild cries of Jonas Coincraft, clubbed the blunderbuss, and rushed upon Walt Punkley.

"Back, you infernal brat!" cried the burglar, drawing the revolver, but retreating backward toward the door. "Back! or I'll blow the head off you!"

"Blow and be blowed!" cried the excited boy, recklessly advancing, while Hadley sprang to his side to pull him back.

"Then you will have it!" cried Punkley, savagely, levelling the pistol, and pulling the trigger, but at that moment it was stricken from his grasp by a cudgel in the hands of John Chunk, and that worthy gentleman rushed forward, followed in heavy order by the Waffles' Brigade, armed with all sorts of weapons, from a base-ball bat to a paving-stone.

"Hooray! The Waffleses to the rescue!" yelled Patsy the News, with a flourish of his stick, and the brigade echoed the cry with ten horse power.

Punkley made a desperate rush for the door, but was seized and handcuffed by a policeman, aided by Kate Coddle and the liberated Meg Merry Lees.

Mifflin had arisen from the floor, and, in a wild, frightened manner, pointed to Hadley.

"Take that man, too, officer!" he gasped, "They are accomplices. They tried to murder my uncle and rob the house."

Hadley stood aghast, but, with a roar like a wild beast, Punkley tried to break loose, and get at the accuser.

"It's a lie, it's hisself, Take him," cried Kate. "I saw him put the poison in the cup, as sure as my name's Kate Coddle."

At this point, Red Dan, with a loud groan, released his hold on the chair, and rolled to the floor. Will Waffles ran toward him, and was joined by Meg and some of the boys.

"It's a conspiracy—a lie!' gasped Oscar Mifflin, wildly. "I tell you, there stands the poisoner. He came here for that purpose. This girl, my cousin, and the nurse herself, heard his threats of vengeance against Jonas Coincraft for the loss of his child and the death of his wife. His name is neither Hadley nor Stonely. He is Richard York who eloped with this old man's daughter!"

"Richard York!' croaked the old man, starting up in the bed,

"Richard York!' gasped Red Dan, wildly.

"Richard York!' exclaimed John Chunk, pushing forward to gaze at the man's pale face. "By the big boot, and so it is! Don't you know me? I'm John Chunk, that saved you from the wreck, off the Ladrones."

Richard York started forward and grasped the fat hand in agitated silence.

"Come!' said the officer.

"Stay one minute," said Punkley. "I suppose I'm going to retire from public life for a while, and I want to set things straight before I leave. That devil's pup that shot my pal, and tried to smash me, that Will Waffles, is the son of this Richard York, and this old man's daughter, that they've been looking for so long."

A cry of astonishment burst from the crowd.

"It's a falsehood!" cried Mifflin.

"I've got the document to prove it," cried Punkley.

"I've got it, you mean" exclaimed John Chunk, holding up Punkley's coat in one hand, and the stained letter in the other. "Here's the paper. I couldn't find the man, Will, but here's his dying deposition given at Bellevue Hospital, and signed Daniel Coddle."

"Daniel Coddle!" screamed Kate in a hysterical manner. "He's dead—he's been dead this many a year.

"Kate! Kate!" came a guttural gasp from the floor.

"Why, that s the man that died at the hospital," said the puzzled John Chunk.

"Oh, Meg! Meg!" cried Kate, throwing herself into her friend's arms, "it's my dear Dan, that was shipwrecked goin' to Buffalo!"

"Kate," gasped the man, "forgive me; I'm a goner this time. It is true what Walt, says. I took the child and left it on the street. Jonas Coincraft hired me to steal it, and I didn t know how else to git rid of it unless I—killed it—and I couldn t do that, Kate—I couldn t do it."

"Th *child* warn t so easy on *you*, poor fellow," said Will Waffles, as the man's head dropped on his knee with relaxed jaw, and the eyes glazed in death.

There is no need to linger on my story; to those who have followed it thus far the interest has culminated.

"So you're to be my dad. and I talking all along like a father to *you*," said Will, as Richard York effectionately embraced him.

Richard York gave a deep sigh, but Will resumed in his usual manner:

"And to think I was jest as near pepperin' your diagram as his'n when I first took my fowlin' piece and went a-shootin' night-hawks. And to think old butter-toes and bellows-lungs is my grand-pop, no less. Say, fellers, how's this for high?"

The Waffleses expressed their appreciation of the highness of the situation in their usual manner—by giving three-times-three, and a tiger, ringtailed roarer and all, to the mortal terror of Jonas Coincraft and the alarm of the neighborhood.

"John Chunk!" said Will slapping his hand into the fat one of his friend and ally, "John Chunk, you're a square cornered brick, and if you have no objections, Jemima Jane—the Countess Crystalina is the female child that'll be God-blessed along with Will Waffles."

So our hero was regularly acknowledged as the grandson and favored heir of Jonas Coincraft. Walt. Punkley was sent back to his old residence upon the Hudson, but he had company on the way this time, in the person of Oscar Mifflin.

Meg Merry Lees was endowed with the means of indulging her taste for black silk, and Will, in remembrance of olden times, and because he had caused the death of Kate Coddles, dear Dan caused that lady to be well provided for,

The Waffles' Sociables now have a new and elegant hall fitted up, and John Chunk has been appointed Worthy Patriarch and Master of Ceremonies. He exerts all his energies to have things ship-shape, and to cause the meetings to be conducted on a parliamentary basis, and hopes before long to place the Association side by side with the Americus Club.

Will attends the meetings occasionally, in State, and it is doubtful if there is a club room in the city more happy or joyous than the "Wafflesonian," where the Sociables extend the hearty hand of welcome to their former president—WILL WAFFLES' THE ARAB OF THE EMPIRE CITY.

THE END.

ORNAM & Co's., FIFTEEN CENT ROMANCES.

No. 1.—MYSTERIES OF THE NIGHT.

BY JOHN F. COWAN.

This is an admirable story of New York Life, and shows up the Mysteries and Miseries of the American Metropolis, with a Vivacity and Lucidity seldom equaled and never excelled. Many of the scenes are particularly exciting, the author having depicted them with a masterly hand, exhibiting a wonderful knowledge of Human Nature. A splendid work for all who require a new sensation.

No. 2.—WILL WAFFLES; OR, THE FREAKS AND FORTUNES OF A NEWS-BOY.

If you wish to spend a few hours pleasantly, buy a copy of this wonderfully amusing book. "Will Waffles" is a courageous, big-hearted News Boy, who knows all the "ins and outs" of City Life, "like a dictionary." Should you want to visit "Flash-kens," "Concert Saloons," "Theatres," "Dives," or even the Church and the Opera, Will Waffles is the boy to guide you. In short "Will Waffles" is lively as a cricket, and the newsboys go nearly mad over his adventures.

No. 3.—OLD HUNDRED SCALPS.

One of the most mysterious characters that ever roamed the Forest and Prairie. Indian after Indian succumbed before his invisible arm, and were found by their com ades lashed to trees, their scalps gone, and across their naked breasts MARKED WITH FIGURES OF BLOOD. But he was caught at last. Read and see how.

No. 4.—THE HAND OF DEATH.

Another story of Indian life, abounding in Thrilling Scenes, Hairbreadth Escapes. Sanguinary Battles betwixt Palefaces and Redskins, and a variety of other wonderful adventures that cannot fail to make the work sell like hot cakes.

No. 5.—RED THUNDERBOLT.

A thrilling tale of adventures among the Redskins. The Hero, Red Thunderbolt, is one of the greatest warriors that ever marched across Forest or Prairie, Swam a River, or Slept in a Wigwam. His hostility to white men was implacable, and he had a very peculiar method of taking scalps!

THE GRAND DUKE ALEXIS.

This elegant work gives a graphic and most interesting description of the young Russian Prince, the Grand Duke Alexis. His grand reception, the magnificent balls, the gorgeous scenes thereof; how he dances, looks walks and talks, with what the ladies think of him, is all described by some of the most accomplished pens of New York. The covers are beautifully illuminated—one side showing the Grand Duke in the act of dancing, opening the Ball; and on the other is a correct representation of the splendid Bouquet of Roses presented to his Royal Highness, by the Belle of the Room. This is a valuable work of Reference, as well as an Interesting Souvenier of the Prince's visit to our shores.

For sale by all News Dealers, or sent by mail on receipt of price—15 cents.

THE HORRORS OF CHICAGO.

In this book the reader will find a reliable history of the Great Fire of Chicego. The Raging of the Destructive Element from beginning to end, is masterly depicted, showing scenes Fearfully Exciting, scenes that the bare remembrance of "harrows up the soul!" Statistical accounts are also appended, showing the lists of contributions, amount of losses, names of principal buildings destroyed, &c., &c., forming a work that ought to be in the hands of every family. For sale by all News Agents, or sent free on receipt of price—15 cents.

ORNUM & CO'S CHEAP PUBLICATIONS.

The simple reason why ORNUM & CO.'S BOOKS are the best selling works in the market, is because they are the Handsomest and best Publications of the kind in America. The covers are Beautifully Illuminated; the Stories the Best that money can procure; the Songs carefully selected by the greatest vocalists of the day, and printed on fine white paper.

☞ ORNUM & CO 'S PUBLICATIONS ARE NEVER "OUT OF PRINT.

ORNUM & CO'S FIFTEEN CENT ROMANCES.

1. Mysteries of the Night.
2. "Will Waffles."
3. Old Hundred Scalps.
4. The Hand of Death.
5. Red Thunderbolt.
6. The Robber Chief
7. Serpent Eye.
8. The Black Mask.
9. The Black Lady of Duna.
10. The Outlaw's Doom.
11. Red Arrow.

"Nilsson Dance Book." 15 cents. "The Horrors of Chicago," 15 cents.

ORNUM & CO'S "INDIAN NOVELS." (Ten Cents.)

No. 1. Wild Joe.
No. 2. Forked Lightning.
No. 3. Big Knife.
No. 4. Dick Whiffles.
No. 5. Crack Skull Bob.
No. 6. Buffalo Bill's Last Scalp.
No. 7. Knock 'em Down Nick.
No. 8. Devil's Eye.
No. 9. Wild Bill's Best Shot.
No. 10. The Boy Warrior.
No. 11. Sly Dick
No. 12 The Boy Scalper.
No. 13. White Rattlesnake:
No. 14. Giant Bravo.
No 15 Big Wraslin' Joe.
No. 16. Thunderin' Jack.

Ornum & Co's "POPULAR NOVELS." (Ten Cents.)

No. 1. The Land'ord's Crime,
No. 2. The Hearts of Steel.
No. 3. Molly McGuires Revengers.
No. 4. The Rebels of Wexford.
No. 5. The Mysterious Murder
No. 6. War-Path.
No. 7. Buffalo Bill's Ride for Life.
No. 8. Jack Sheppard.

ORNUM & CO'S TEN CENT SONG AND JOKE BOOKS'

1. The "Beauty of Broadway" Songster
2. "Moonlight Walk" Songster.
3. "Bewitching Girl" Songster.
4. "Coming through the Rye' Songster
5. "Belle of the Blondes" Songster.
6. "No You Don't" Songster
7. "Biddy Toole" Songster.
8. "Fenian Martyrs" Songster.
9. "Girl on the Wire" Songster
10. "Harry Hill" Songster.
11. "Lake Shore on Sunday" Songster.
12. "Young Man from the C'ry" S'gst'r.
13. "Kiss me before you Go" Songster.
14. "Nilsson" Songster.
15. "Happy Nigger Joseph" Songster.
16. "Come Sit by my Side, Darling."
17. "Frank Lum's Last Sensation" S'r.
18. "When the Corn is Waving, Annie."
19. "John Brougham's Exile of Erin.
20. "Burning of Chicago" Songster.
21. "Whiskey on the Brain "Songster.
22. "Brudder Bones Stump Speech"
23. "Gallant Jimmy Fisk" Joker.
24. "G. L. Fox, Wee Willie Winkie."
25. "Jim Mace" Reciter.
26. "Bonny Bunch of Roses" Songster
27. "Dick Martz's Sensational" S'gs'r
28. "Don't be Angry with Me, Darling.'
29. "Belle of the Ball" Songster.
30. "Little Barefoot" Songster.
31. "Mudder Bones Stump Speech Book
32. "Josie Mansfield's" Songster.
33. "Jim Fisk's Funeral March" S'r.
34. "Frank Lum's Variety" Songster.
35. "Horace Greeley's Chin. Joker.
36. "Swell of the Bowery" S'gs'r
37 "Plug Sossage Billy" Songster.
38 "When the Band begins to Play."
39 "Down in the Coal Mine."
40 "The Harp of Tara."
41 "Greeley Campaign" Songster.
42 "Songs of Sweet Ireland" Sgr.

☞ The above books are the best and most interesting works in the market For sale by all Newsdealers, or sent free on receipt of marked price.

ORNUM & Co., Publishers, NEW YORK

DYL 6978

Ex Libris

SEYMOUR DURST

FORT NEW AMSTERDAM (NEW YORK), 1651.

When you leave, please leave this book
Because it has been said
"Ever'thing comes t' him who waits
Except a loaned book."

AVERY ARCHITECTURAL AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY

GIFT OF SEYMOUR B. DURST OLD YORK LIBRARY

ORNUM & Cos., FIFTEEN CENT ROMANCES

No. 1.—THE MYSTERIES OF THE NIGHT; OR, LIFE SCENES IN NEW YORK
PRICE, ... 15 CENTS.
No. 2.—WILL WAFFLES; OR, THE FREAKS AND FORTUNES OF A NEWS BOY 15 CENTS.
No. 3.—"OLD HUNDRED SCALPS;" OR, A WILD TALE OF THE WOODS. . 15 CENTS
No. .—THE HAND OF DEATH. . . . . 15 CENTS

THE NILSSON DANCE AND BALL-ROOM GUIDE. . . . . 15 CENTS.
Bound in Board: Cloth Back, ... 25 CENTS.
This book contains nine illustrations—and gives thorough instructions on the Art of Dancing.
THE HORRORS OF CHICAGO—gives a full description of the Great Fire in Chicago.
PRICE. . . . . 15 CENTS.

THE AMERICAN CLUB SWINGER—this book contains a portrait of the Champion Club Swinger of America, ogether with full instructions for Club Swinging. 25 Cts.

ORNUM & Cos., TEN CENT SONG BOOKS.

The "BEAUTY OF BROADWAY" Songster
The "MOONLIGHT-WALK" Songster.
The "BEWITCHING GIRL'S" Songster.
The "COMING THROUGH THE RYE" Songster.
The "BELLE OF THE BLONDES" Songster.
The "TONY PASTOR" No You Don't, Songster.
The "BIDDY TOOLE" Songster.
The "THE FENIAN MARTYRS" Cushla Gal Machre, Songster.
The "GIRL ON THE WIRE" Songster.
The "HARRY HILL" Songster. With a Portrait of "Harry Hill."
The "LAKE SHORE ON SUNDAY NIGHT" Songster.
The "YOUNG MAN FROM THE COUNTRY" Songster.
The "KISS ME BEFORE YOU GO" Songster.
The "NILSSON" Songster. Portrait of "Christine Nilsson."
The "HAPPY NIGGER JOSEPH" Songster.
The "COME SIT BY MY SIDE LITTLE DARLING" Songster.
The 'FRANK LUM's Last Sensation" Songster.
The "WHEN THE CORN IS WAVING ANNIE" Songster.
The "JOHN BROUGHAM'S EXILE OF ERIN' Songster.
The "BURNING OF CHICAGO" Songster.
The "WHISKEY ON THE BRAIN" Songster.

NEW JOKE BOOKS.

The G. L. FOX, "WEE WILLIE WINKEE" Joker.
The "JIM MACE" Reciter. Portrait of JIM MACE and COBURN.
The "GALLANT JIMMY FISKE" Joker.
The "BRUDDER BONES STUMP SPEECH and JOKE BOOK.

☞ The above books are never out of print, and are always for sale by all Newsdealers, or sent, post paid, to any address, on receipt of price—Ten Cents.

ORNUM & Co., Publishers.
P. O. Box 3643. NEW YORK.